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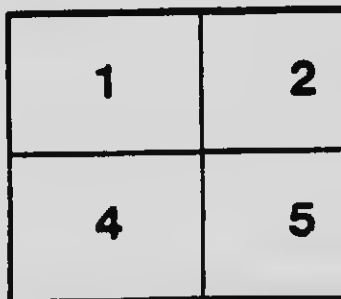
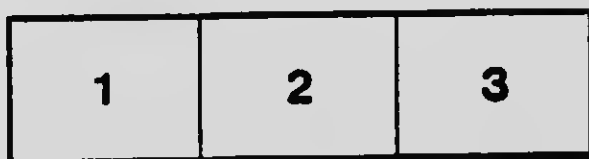
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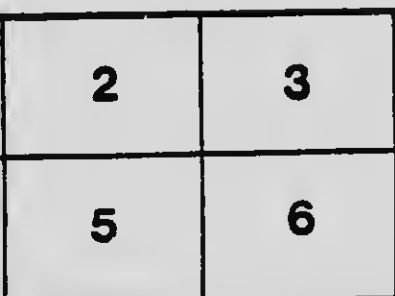
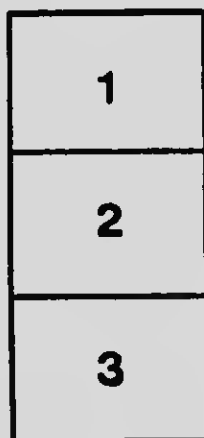
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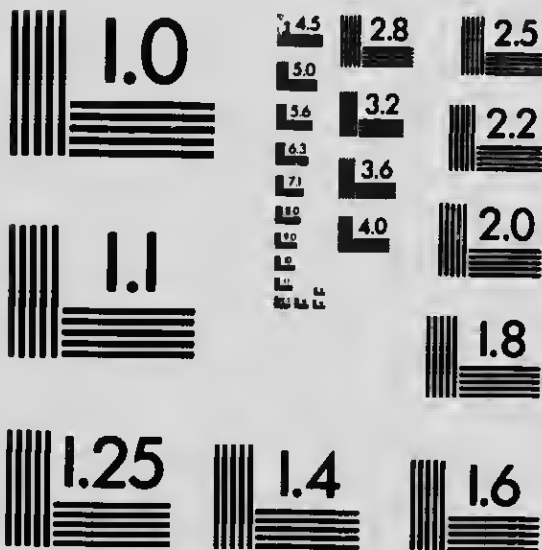
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ON THE
TRUE DEVOTION
TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN.

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ALL FOR JESUS THROUGH MARY !



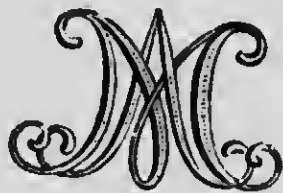
FILIAL DEVOTION TO MARY.
All I have is Thine, dear Mother !
All Thou hast is Mine !

A TREATISE
ON THE
TRUE DEVOTION
TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN

BY THE BLESSED
LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNON DE MONTFORT.

Translated from the Original French by
FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER, D.D.,
PRIEST OF THE ORATORY.

With Preface by the Archbishop of Westminster.



ST. CHARLES' SEMINARY
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PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

IN presenting the public with a fifth edition of Father Faber's translation of the Blessed Grignon de Montfort's *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, it has been thought expedient to prefix to it a few observations on criticisms which have been made by a certain class of minds on reading the editions which have been already exhausted.

First, some readers who are terribly sensitive to the voice and conclusions of Protestant criticism have been shocked by certain words and phrases which the blessed servant of God has used in different parts of his treatise. For instance, here and there the Blessed Virgin is called "*the divine Mary*." We do not say this is a usual way of speaking of the Blessed Virgin, or that any one is called upon to adopt it. But it is quite certain that the word *divine* may be used without attribut-

ing the nature of divinity to the person or thing thus qualified. We speak of our own prayers, whether addressed to God or to His Saints, as a divine service. The Psalmist speaks of us all as being gods and sons of the Most High ; and yet no one takes offence, because the sense given to the words uttered is understood. Mary may be called Divine because divinely chosen for the divine office of Mother to the Divinity. That which was so closely associated with the Divinity, that which was so overshadowed by it, that which was so unspeakably endowed and enriched by it, may not inappropriately be spoken of as divine. It is curious to note that while some persons have taken offence at the use of this word divine, the Promoter of the Faith, who criticised this very treatise of De Montfort with excessive severity, takes no exception whatever to the occasional application of the adjective divine to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, with regard to this objection and to phrases which are used in different parts of the Treatise, it is important to bear in mind the teaching of Benedict XIV. in the *Constitution* which he prefixed to the Index. He says : "We

give warning that it must be diligently remembered that a correct judgment of the true sense of an author cannot be arrived at *unless* the book be read all through, in all its parts, and the things found in different places be compared one with the other, and *unless* the whole scope and end of the author be attentively considered and examined. The author is not to be judged by one or other proposition torn from its context, or disjoined from other propositions to be found within the same book. For it frequently happens that what an author says carelessly or obscurely in one part of his work is explained clearly, fully, and distinctly in another part; so that the darkness which seemed to conceal something wrong is afterwards altogether dissipated, and the proposition is seen to be free of all error." An application of this wise and common-sense instruction to the works of Blessed Grignon de Montfort will easily convince any one that they are not deserving of any censure.

We have now before us the various criticisms and disquisitions upon the writings of De Montfort, printed for the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1851, before final

judgment was pronounced as to whether they contained anything to hinder the course of beatification and canonisation from proceeding. The Promoter of the Faith makes an important declaration. He says that the author of the second disquisition, having read all the writings of De Montfort, has put forward the general principle upon which the whole of the servant of God's teaching is based, and that in this way he has found an answer to detailed criticisms which had been made upon isolated passages by another Censor, who confessed, moreover, that through illness he had not been able to master the whole subject by studying all the venerable servant of God's works. The words of the critic referred to are as follows :

“The fundamental principle on which the doctrine of the venerable servant of God is based is that of the life of Jesus Christ in the soul regenerated in Holy Baptism, namely, the principle expressed by St. Paul in these words, ‘*that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts*’ (Eph. iii. 17) : ‘*I live ; now not I, but Christ liveth in me*’ (Gal. ii. 20) &c. It is that life of the new Adam in the soul of a Christian ; that life

of which the illustrious martyr and Bishop, St. Ignatius of Antioch, spoke, when he said of himself and of other Christian friends of God, we are bearers of Christ, because Jesus Christ lives in us ; that life which was recognised by the father of Origen when he kissed his son upon his breast, as being a true sanctuary, a real temple of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

“ Now, this devotion to the life of Jesus Christ in the sanctified soul, having been a devotion specially recommended by M. Olier, the pious founder of St. Sulpice, naturally took possession of the heart of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort, who was one of the most illustrious students of that Seminary.

“ And from the same source sprang his particular form of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which was so closely connected with the devotion to the life of Jesus in the soul. It is well expressed in the following prayer, which is recited daily by the students of St. Sulpice :

“ *O Jesu vivens in Maria, &c.*—O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in Thy servants, in the spirit of Thy sanctity, in the plenitude of Thy gifts, in the perfection of

Thy ways, in the communication of Thy mysteries ; overcome all the powers of the enemy in Thy spirit, to the glory of the Father. Amen.’”

The teaching of Blessed Grignon de Montfort is further illustrated by the words spoken by the Blessed Virgin to St. Bridget, in those Revelations which have three times passed under the examination of the Holy See. She said. “He who sees God sees me ; and he who sees me may see the Divinity and Humanity in me as in a mirror, and me in God. For whoever sees God sees Three Persons in Him ; and whoever sees me sees, as it were, the Three Persons. For the Deity folded me in Itself with my soul and body, and filled me with every virtue, so that there is no virtue in God which does not shine in me.”—*Rev.*, b. I. chap. xlii.

Another difficulty has been raised against this Treatise, *viz.* that, in advocating the use of little chains as a badge of slavery to Jesus Christ, the blessed author was going counter to the discipline of the Church, which, by a formal decree, has forbidden the use of chains and certain other prac-

tices by an association called the Confraternity of the Slaves of the Mother of God. But it will be seen, as has been pointed out in the official examination of De Montfort's works, that the slavery he speaks of and the chains he recommends relate directly to Jesus Christ. Many English people dislike the use of the term slavery, and are unwilling to apply it to themselves. They prefer to consider themselves the servants of God; nay, the sons of God. But is not our blessed author right when he says, "We ought to give ourselves to Jesus Christ, and to serve Him, not only as servants who work for wages, but as loving slaves, who, out of their great love, deliver themselves up to Him to serve Him as His slaves" ? There is a vast difference between the condition of a servant who is free to bargain and to go whenever he wills, who retains full power over himself, and the condition of one who has given himself up wholly and irrevocably to the service of another. St. Paul rejoiced in being the slave of Jesus Christ; and the Catechism of the Council of Trent declares that, considering all we have received from Jesus Christ, it is most just that we should devote and consecrate

ourselves for ever, even as slaves, to our Redeemer and Sovereign Lord.

Lastly, it may be well to say that the Church has given no positive approbation to the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. The fact that its author is now ranked among the Beatified Servants of God, and that we know with certainty that he is reigning for ever in heaven with God, is not of itself a formal approbation by the Church of all that he wrote. Benedict XIV. may be again quoted. He says: "It can never be said that the teaching of a servant of God has been approved by the Holy See, but, at most, that it has not been reprobated, if the examiners have reported that nothing has been found in his works contrary to the decree of Urban VIII., and if the judgment of the examiners has been approved by the Sacred Congregation, and confirmed by the Sovereign Pontiff." All that the Holy See has done has been to pronounce that there was nothing in the writings of De Montfort to hinder his beatification and canonisation. But the Church throughout the world is gradually forming an opinion of the value of De Montfort's writings, and that opinion seems to be in-

creasingly favourable to them. From all sides comes the same expression of experience—that they are full and deep and inexhaustible ; that they bear reading over and over again ; that they produce lasting fruits in the soul.

One of the examiners of his works engaged by the Promoter of the Faith began his formal judgment on them with these words : "*I must begin* by confessing the impression produced in me by reading the precious writings of this venerable servant of God. I have experienced an interior unctio, a peace, and a consolation which the writings of highly-favoured servants of God, of servants of God *endowed with lights* and with *sanctity of an extraordinary kind*, are known frequently to produce. This impression was profound and sweet to the highest degree." Now that the blessed author has been honoured by the Church by having been raised to the altars, and that his *cultus* has been formally sanctioned and recommended, we can feel no doubt but that his influence will greatly extend, and that he will speak, through his *True Devotion to Mary*, to hundreds of thousands with a greater persuasion and a sweeter

unction than heretofore. In our humble judgment no one can do better than spread the knowledge of this golden treatise on devotion to our Blessed Mother.

✠ HERBERT.

Bishop of Salford.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL,
Salford, April 26, 1888.

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LETTER TO THE CLERGY,

ord.

SECULAR AND REGULAR,

OF THE DIOCESE OF SALFORD.

VERY REV. AND REV. DEAR FATHERS AND BRETHREN IN JESUS CHRIST,—The sanctification of the soul is more dependent upon Our Blessed Lady's continuous care and maternal love than upon the influence of any other creature. As the Incarnation of God depended upon her goodwill and consent, so the elevation of man to a state of eternal beatitude depends upon her assistance. Mary is no less necessary to the redeemed than she was to the Redeemer; and theology tells us that she was necessary to Him by a necessity called hypothetical.

Constituted as we are, by our office, guide of men along the rugged path of life, we

are doubly bound to make a special study of Mary's place in the work of man's sanctification. It is not enough to recognise her singular prerogatives ; we must proclaim and explain them, until men know her, love her, and fly to her, as to the "*Felix cœli Porta.*"

This, then, is one reason for causing to be published and dedicating to you, dear Rev. Fathers and Brethren, this third edition of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort's *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. Another reason is, that this little work seems to have a quite unspeakable value for any one who has pronounced a Consecration of himself to the Blessed Virgin, and through her to God.

Many of us have happily been brought up by pious parents, who instilled a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin into our hearts from the dawn of reason. Many of us were led later on, by pious masters or confessors, to make a solemn consecration of ourselves to this good Mother. We well remember the grave moment when we publicly made this religious consecration of ourselves to her in the Solidality Chapel at Stonyhurst, now forty years ago. To con-

secrete oneself to her is an instinct of Catholic faith, and a practice very widely spread among the Catholic laity in England, as well as among the clergy.

Some acts of devotion are transient—if we may call any supernatural act transient, whose fragrance and bloom are imperishable, and destined to enter into the sum of our joy for eternity, while others ought to be permanently energising within us, strengthening and deepening in our soul through life. Such, for instance, are the vows made in baptism, the vows of our priesthood, our apostolic vow to serve the mission, our religious vows if we have any, and such also is our solemn consecration to the Blessed Mother of God. The vows of baptism we understood nothing of, at the time we made them; our Consecration to Mary was probably appreciated only according to the mind of a child, its full significance being veiled under a very imperfect knowledge. The first was not a mere ceremony, the second was not a passing sentiment of devotion. Each was intended, in its separate way, to be a life-long reality.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent

exhorts parish priests to teach their people the meaning of their baptismal vows ; and their solemn renewal is not unfrequently repeated in our churches, at the close of missions and retreats.

A quite extraordinary spiritual benefit to the whole soul may also be derived from a careful study and realisation of the consecration we once made of ourselves to the Blessed Virgin. . Indeed, such a study is necessary if the consecration is to last, and if the soul is to bear its proper consecrated fruit. The reason why so much piety is shallow and evanescent, why religion so frequently fails to take hold of the mind, and to govern the conduct of the stronger natures, is because the intellect has not been thoroughly engaged on the side of religion. The more intellect is developed by education, the more it must be pressed into the service of God.

Now, De Montfort's *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* appeals as strongly to the intellect as it does to the heart. Any one who has really mastered it will feel that his consecration to Mary has been sensibly raised to a higher plane, and flooded with new light. He will also see its

close and important connection with the renewal of his baptismal vows.

I remember reading it when Father Faber published his English translation of it in 1862, not long before his own death. And I well remember how enthusiastically Monsignor Newsham, the venerable and beloved President of Ushaw College, wrote about it and recommended it in all directions. I had not read it again till last summer, when it fell in my way apparently by accident. I then gave a whole week to the constant and exclusive study of it, and have been frequently reading it ever since. One result of this study has been a full realisation of Father Faber's words: "I would venture to warn the reader of this Treatise"—these are his words—"that one perusal will be very far from making him a master of it..... after repeated readings of it, its novelty never seems to wear off, nor its fulness to be diminished, nor the fresh fragrance and sensible fire of its unction ever to abate." And another result was a determination to get it reprinted, in order that I might place a copy of it in the hands of every priest in the diocese, with a counsel not to be satisfied, as I had been

twenty years ago, with one perusal of it, but to read it repeatedly, so as to experience personally the transformation it is capable of working in the soul.

There are expressions in this Treatise that may sound strange to ears educated in the cold, critical, controversial atmosphere of England, where even good people have sometimes felt apologetically in admitting the sovereignty and sway of their heavenly Queen. Heresy, on the absurd and pharisaical pretence of zeal for God, chides and condemns that generous and unrestrained outpouring of confidence and affection for the Mother of their Redemption, the Mother of their Sanctification and Salvation, which is so natural to the children of Mary, and which gives them a Christ-like character. It has consequently had much to say against this Treatise. I may, therefore, observe that the process for De Montfort's canonisation is far advanced. His virtues have been declared to have been heroic, and all his writings free from anything contrary to faith or morals, or to the Church's common sentiment or practice. The Congregation of Rites has now passed to the examination of the miracles. His

writings are, therefore, in the same category as the works of St. Alphonso, which no one may condemn as unsound, though we are free to discuss their merits or lay them aside, if we find they do not suit or help us. The teaching of De Montfort was very closely examined some years ago by a learned theologian, in the first volume of the *Analecta Pontificia*, and again, in the preface to the English edition of his life. Dr. Pusey attacked it in his *Eirenicon*, and thus gave to Dr. Ward an opportunity of defending it in a most masterly way in the *Dublin Review*. The series of articles then put forth have since been published in a single volume, entitled *Essays, Devotional and Scriptural*.

I will notice only one objection that may be raised against De Montfort's doctrine: namely, that it interferes with that straight and direct intercourse with the Sacred Humanity which is our greatest honour and privilege; and that it sets *her* pattern before us for imitation rather than that of our Blessed Lord. The objection is more specious than real. Of course, our Blessed Lord is "the way, the truth, and the life." for each one of us, and He Himself has said, "Come ye all to Me." But

surely we go none the less straight, none the less securely to the Son, because we beseech His Mother to take us by the hand, and to accompany us, and to put in a motherly word for her poor children. It is most reasonable to suppose that we shall find Him the more quickly and the more certainly if we approach Him by the very path which He Himself trod in coming to us—no other than the path of His Blessed Mother.

If our Guardian Angel mercifully attends us in every step we make and never leaves us absolutely alone, what difficulty can there be in beseeching Mary never to leave us for a moment, and to show us more and more clearly on each occasion the blessed fruit of her womb ?

If even Satan be sometimes allowed to possess the souls and bodies of evil purpose or for their mysterious trial, may we not believe that Mary, who carried the whole mystical body of Christ within her heart, possesses at least an equal power over our souls and bodies—for our welfare and happiness ?

But, in truth, the whole doctrine of this Venerable Apostle of Mary is little more

than an expansion of those beautiful and pregnant words of the liturgical hymn :

“ Monstra te esse Matrem,
Sumat per te preces
Qui pro nobis natus
Tulit esse tuus.”

Though one of De Montfort's counsels, which of course we are free to adopt or not as we please, goes so far as to recommend an *explicit* reference to Mary in all our prayers, so as never to separate Jesus and Mary in our thoughts, he says that this can be done by a mere glance of the mind towards Mary, and that it need in no way hinder the mind in its contemplation of the Sacred Humanity.

And if, as he says, the best way to imitate Jesus is to imitate His Blessed Mother, what is this but to act upon a principle again and again inculcated by the Holy Spirit Himself in the New Testament? “*Rogo ego vos, imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi,*” says St. Paul to the Corinthians. “*Et vos imitatores nostri facti estis, et Domini,*” he writes to the Thessalonians. “*Imitatores mei estote fratres, et observate eos*

qui ita ambulant sicut habetis formam nostram”—so as you have “*our model*”—is the injunction he presses upon the Philippians. Here, then, the principle is clearly laid down, and the Venerable Grignon applied it, like St. Ambrose, who wrote, “Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to magnify the Lord ; let the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God.”

But there can be no mistake as to the teaching of De Montfort, and its direct tendency to bring us into union with Jesus Christ. This is worth insisting on by one or two quotations from his words ; “I avow, with all the Church, that Mary, being but a mere creature that has come from the hands of the Most High, is, in comparison with His Infinite Majesty, less than an atom, or rather, she is nothing at all.” Again, “The predestinate well know what is the most sure, the most easy, the most short, and the most perfect means by which *to go to Jesus Christ* ; and they will deliver themselves to Mary, body and soul, without reserve, *that they may thus be all for Jesus Christ.*” “Jesus Christ our Saviour, true God, and true Man, ought to be the last end of all our other devotions,

else they are false and delusive." And again, "If we establish the solid devotion to our Blessed Lady, it is only to establish more perfectly the devotion to Jesus Christ, and to put forward an easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. If devotion to our Lady removed us from Jesus Christ, we should have to reject it as an illusion of the devil."

Like some of the Saints, the Venerable Grignon de Montfort seems to have been charged by God with a special mission. He declares that he comes with a distinct message, and he speaks like one inspired by the gift of prophecy. Two hundred years ago he spoke of a marvellous increase of devotion to Mary then to come; he declared that devotion to Mary will make the great Saints that are to appear at the end of the world. He asserted positively that "God wishes that His holy Mother should be more known, more loved, more honoured, than she has ever been," and "that the Most High with His holy Mother has to form for Himself great Saints who shall surpass most of the other Saints in sanctity as much as the cedars of Lebanon outgrow the little shrubs."

Part of his prophecy has been already fulfilled, as all can see. *I say nothing of his*

prophecy as to what should befall his Treatise on Devotion to Our Lady, and of how strangely it has been verified ; but I cannot help pointing out the fact that a number of Festivals in honour of our Lady have been instituted since De Montfort's death in 1716, and that religious Congregations of both sexes have been established, almost without number, either under the name of Mary, or in honour of her prerogatives and the mysteries connected with her life. With what marvellous zeal, too, the Bishops and people of the whole of Christendom petitioned Pius IX. to define her Immaculate Conception, and with what solemnity and rejoicings was it not at last defined ! And now the successor of Pius IX., a Pontiff whose characteristic is learning, and whose Apostolic Letters are addressed especially to the intellect of the age, has thrown himself and the whole Church upon the bosom of Mary with a devotion and faith never surpassed. Leo XIII. commanded and decreed a thing never before heard of : that the Rosary and the Litany of Mary should be sung or recited in every church, where there is charge of souls, throughout the world, and that not once or twice, but for a period of time ex-

ceeding a month. Surely all this is after the spirit and prediction of De Montfort. And still further, as though to point out the most intimate personal relationship still existing between Mary and Jesus, and the importance of invoking both together, the Holy Father commanded that her Rosary and Litany should be recited either in connection with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or at Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Assuredly the increase of devotion to Mary during the last two hundred years has been quite extraordinary and unprecedented. Nor was there anything two centuries ago, when everything appeared so dark, to warrant this marvellous growth. If one part of the prophecy of De Montfort has been verified under our own eyes, we are naturally led to believe that he spoke by the Spirit of God, and that the remaining part, referring to the latter days, may yet be fulfilled. And thus we are again drawn by a number of further considerations to do all we can, as pastors of souls, to deepen devotion to Mary, and to perfect that consecration to her which we ourselves and our penitents may have made in years long gone by, "in order that

thus," in the words of De Montfort, "we may be all for Jesus Christ."

Finally, while the Vicar of Christ has turned the whole mind and heart of the Church to Mary, we may be certain that the Heavenly Patron of the Universal Church has been watching over the Pontiff and the people of God. He of all the Saints is best able to teach us how to think of Mary, how to honour her. As St. Teresa said, "If you know not how to pray, take Joseph for your master, and you will not go astray." St. Joseph necessarily leads the members of the mystical body of Christ to the love of their Mother, his own most blessed Spouse. He will have part and lot with her and with the Church during those latter ages of the world when the struggle between good and evil shall become intensified. He well knows that *she* will finally destroy all heresies, that *she* will, finally and for ever, crush with her heel the serpent's head. He will, therefore, help us to perfect our consecration to Mary. As Joseph and Mary shared the humiliation and obscurity of the Redeemer for thirty years, they will take a conspicuous and noble part with Him in the glory and

triumph of the Church at the end of the world.

Meanwhile, may Mary often communicate with your souls, not, indeed, after the manner of those who are in the flesh, but by those intellectual operations which are proper, St. Thomas tells us, to the Blessed ; operations which are not hindered by local distance, and which often take place in the kingdom of the soul, even without our knowledge or consciousness.

May the constant use of her Rosary multiply your joy in conversions ; and may the frequent perusal of this Treatise so illumine your soul with the clear and blessed light of this most sweet "Morning Star," as to enable you to lead innumerable souls by a most natural and easy way into the burning and all-absorbing love of "Jesus, the Sun of Justice."

Wishing you every grace and blessing,

I am always,

Very Rev. and Rev. dear Fathers,

Your faithful and devoted Servant,

✠ HERBERT,

Bishop of Salford.

BISHOP'S HOUSE, SALFORD,

Nov. 1, 1883.

PREFACE.

It was in the year 1846 or 1847, at St. Wilfrid's, that I first studied the life and spirit of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort; and now, after more than fifteen years, it may be allowable to say that those who take him for their master will hardly be able to name a Saint or ascetical writer to whose grace and spirit their mind will be more subject than to his. We may not yet call him Saint; but the process of his beatification is so far and so favourably advanced that we may not have long to wait before he will be raised upon the altars of the Church.

There are few men in the eighteenth century who have more strongly upon them the marks of the man of Providence than this Elias-like missionary of the Holy Ghost and of Mary. His entire life was such an exhibition of the holy folly of the Cross,

that his biographers unite in always class-
ing him with St. Simon Salo and St. Philip
Neri. Clement XI. made him a missionary-
apostolic in France, in order that he might
spend his life in fighting against Jansenism,
so far as it affected the salvation of souls.
Since the apostolical epistles it would be
hard to find words that burn so marvel-
lously as the twelve pages of his prayer
for the Missionaries of the Holy Ghost, to
which I earnestly refer all those who find
it hard to keep up under their numberless
trials the first fires of the love of souls.
He was at once persecuted and venerated
everywhere. His amount of work, like
that of St. Antony of Padua, is incredible
and, indeed, inexplicable. He wrote some
spiritual treatises, which have already had
a remarkable influence on the Church
during the few years they have been known,
and bid fair to have a much wider influ-
ence in years to come. His preaching, his
writing, and his conversation were all im-
pregnated with prophecy and with antici-
pations of the later ages of the Church.
He comes forward like another St. Vincent
Ferrer, as if on the days bordering on the
Last Judgment, and proclaims that he

brings an authentic message from God about the greater honour and wider knowledge and more prominent love of His Blessed Mother, and her connection with the second advent of her Son. He founded two religious congregations—one of men and one of women—which have been quite extraordinarily successful; and yet he died at the age of forty-three in 1716, after only sixteen years of priesthood.

It was on the 12th of May 1853 that the decree was pronounced at Rome, declaring his writing to be exempt from all error which could be a bar to his canonisation. In this very treatise on the veritable devotion to our Blessed Lady, he has recorded this prophecy: "I clearly foresee that raging brutes will come in fury to tear with their diabolical teeth this little writing and him whom the Holy Ghost has made use of to write it; or at least to envelop it in the silence of a coffer, in order that it may not appear." Nevertheless, he prophesies both its appearance and its success. All this was fulfilled to the letter. The author died in 1716, and the treatise was found by accident by one of the priests of his congregation at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre

in 1842. The existing Superior was able to attest the handwriting as being that of the venerable founder ; and the autograph was sent to Rome to be examined in the process of canonisation.

All those who are likely to read this book love God, and lament that they do not love Him more ; all desire something for His glory—the spread of some good work, the success of some devotion, the coming of some good time. One man has been striving for years to overcome a particular fault, and has not succeeded. Another mourns, and almost wonders while he mourns, that so few of his relations and friends have been converted to the faith. One grieves that he has not devotion enough ; another that he has a cross to carry, which is a peculiarly impossible cross to him ; while a third has domestic troubles and family unhappinesses, which feel almost incompatible with his salvation ; and for all these things prayer appears to bring so little remedy. But what is the remedy that is wanted ? what is the remedy indicated by God Himself ? If we may rely on the disclosures of the Saints, it is an immense increase of devotion to our Blessed Lady ;

but, remember, nothing short of an *immense* one. Here, in England, Mary is not half enough preached. Devotion to her is low and thin and poor. It is frightened out of its wits by the sneers of heresy. It is always invoking human respect and carnal prudence, wishing to make Mary so little of a Mary that Protestants may feel at ease about her. Its ignorance of theology makes it unsubstantial and unworthy. It is not the prominent characteristic of our religion which it ought to be. It has no faith in itself. Hence it is that Jesus is not loved, that heretics are not converted, that the Church is not exalted; that souls, which might be saints, wither and dwindle; that the Sacraments are not rightly frequented, or souls enthusiastically evangelised. Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background. Thousands of souls perish because Mary is withheld from them. It is the miserable unworthy shadow which we call our devotion to the Blessed Virgin that is the cause of all these wants and blights, these evils and omissions and declines. Yet, if we are to believe the revelations of the Saints, God is *pressing* for a greater, a wider, a stronger,

quite another devotion to His Blessed Mother. I cannot think of a higher work or a broader vocation for any one than the simple spreading of this peculiar devotion of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort. Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Oh, if Mary were but known, there would be no coldness to Jesus then! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much more wonderful would be our faith, and how different would our Communion be! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much happier, how much holier, how much less worldly should we be, and how much more should we be living images of our sole Lord and Saviour, her dearest and most Blessed Son!

I have translated the whole treatise myself, and have taken great pains with it, and have been scrupulously faithful. At the same time, I would venture to warn the reader that one perusal will be very

far from making him master of it. If I may dare to say so, there is a growing feeling of something inspired and supernatural about it, as we go on studying it ; and with that we cannot help experiencing, after repeated readings of it, that its novelty never seems to wear off, nor its freshness to be diminished, nor the fresh fragrance and sensible fire of its unction ever to abate. May the Holy Ghost, the Divine Zealot of Jesus and Mary, deign to give a new blessing to this work in England ; and may He please to console us quickly with the canonisation of this new apostle and fiery missionary of His most dear and most Immaculate Spouse ; and still more with the speedy coming of that great age of the Church, which is to be the Age of Mary !

F. W. FABER,

Priest of the Oratory.

Presentation of our Blessed Lady,

1862.

NOTE.

See *Vie de Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort* (Le Clerc, Paris, 1839) ; also the Jesuit Father Clorivière's *Life of him*, 1785. Grandet's *Life of him* (1724), as well as Bastide's memoirs of fifty missions given with the servant of God, I only know by the quotations in the *Life of 1839*.



PREFACE TO THE FRENCH EDITION.

“God wishes that His holy Mother should now be more known, more loved, more honoured, than ever she has been ; and this will no doubt come to pass, if the predestinate will enter, by the grace and light of the Holy Ghost, into the interior and perfect practice which I will discover to them.” These words of the venerable servant of God, Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, cannot fail to interest our piety, and to inspire us with a lively desire of learning from him so excellent a practice of honouring the most holy Virgin.

He had been drawn from his earliest infancy, in quite a particular fashion, to the love of this Queen of Angels ; and in a conversation which he had with his intimate friend Monsieur Blain, two years before his death, the pious missionary confessed to him that God had favoured him with an extraordinary grace, which was the con-

tinued presence of Jesus and Mary in the bottom of his soul. This word was a mystery to Monsieur Blain ; but we shall see the explanation of it in this little treatise. We shall see revealed to us there the heart of him who knew no fairer name than the slave of Jesus in Mary. We do not, however, pretend to say that this explanation will be equally understood by all. We must remember here that word of the Eternal Wisdom, "Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to the little ones." It has been said in the Life of the venerable servant of God, that his history will never be understood except by a Christian. It has this in common with the lives of a great number of the servants of God. We may say also that this little work will never be understood by a Christian who is too much a stranger to the maxims of humility and evangelical simplicity, and that the wise of this world will find themselves shocked at the lessons of true wisdom which they will read without penetrating their sense. *Animalis homo non percipit ea, quæ sunt Spiritus Dei. Stultitia enim est illi, et non potest intelligere, quia spiritualiter examinatur.* The

man who guides himself only by natural light does not comprehend the things of the Spirit of God. They seem to him follies, because they can only be judged by a supernatural light which he has not got. But let us hasten to add that sincere and simple souls will relish the manna hidden in the pious and touching instructions of the virtuous priest who consumed his life in evangelising the poor. They will bless Divine Providence for the treasure. They will feel themselves penetrated with love for Jesus and Mary, in reading these burning pages, which the man of God wrote in the fervour of his prayer, without ever losing sight of the presence of our Divine Saviour and His holy Mother.... In conclusion, let us say a few words on the discovery of this treatise.

At the time of the French revolution in 1793, the manuscripts which the house of the Missionaries of St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre possessed were hidden in the neighbouring farms, where they remained buried in dust for many years. Later on, those which were found were put into the library of the missionaries. But this little treatise was not at that time recognised, as was the case with some others also composed by the

venerable founder of the company. It was not till 1842 that one of the priests of the house of St. Laurent found it by chance in the library, where it had been put without being recognised, after having been mixed up with a great number of imperfect books. "After I had read a few pages," says the priest, "I took it, hoping to find it useful for making a sermon on our Lady. I read by chance the place where he speaks of his Company of Mary. I recognised the style and thoughts of our venerable founder, and his way of addressing his missionaries; and after that I had no doubt the manuscript was his. I took it to our superior, who identified the handwriting."

[The manuscript has been examined at Rome; recognised to be the work of the venerable servant of God; most minutely examined in its doctrine; and declared to be exempt from all error which could be a bar to his canonisation.]

PREFACE TO THE SECRET OF MARY.

This little Work, published for the first time but a few years ago, and already translated into many languages, was composed by the Blessed Father de Montfort. When discovered, it bore upon it the following inscription : "*Copy of a manuscript written with his own hand, by the late Father de Montfort on the Slavery of the Blessed Virgin, and sent by him to a pious person of his acquaintance.*" This manuscript is kept at the Mother House of the Daughters of Wisdom, at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre, France. Those who have read his Treatise on the True Devotion to Our Lady, translated by Father Faber, will recognise, at once the style of the Servant of God, and, in many places, the very same expressions. The zealous servants of Mary will gladly welcome these pages filled with tender and solid piety towards the Mother of God. In reading them, but, above all, in practising them, they will better and more easily understand the very excellent devotion which consists in giving ourselves entirely to Jesus through Mary ; in acting only in Mary and

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by Mary, so as to live only in Jesus and for Jesus.

After having read this little essay, they will want to read the *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* in which the Blessed Father de Montfort fully develops his idea.

The "Tree of Life" which follows the "Secret of Mary" is its natural completion. It is an ingenious emblem by means of which this zealous servant of Mary represents, in a graceful and striking manner, the practice of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This "Tree of Life" and the two Prayers to Jesus and Mary were also written by the servant of God.

We have thought it well to unite in one volume these two precious works, and to add to them the Blessed de Montfort's Method of assisting at Mass, of receiving Holy Communion, of saying the Rosary, of offering our daily actions, and of consecrating ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, with some other prayers in general use. May the blessing of Jesus and Mary descend upon all those who will read this book, giving them to taste of the hidden manna which it contains !

THE SECRET OF MARY

Revealed to the Devout Soul.

Predestinate soul, I have a secret for you, which the Most High has taught me, and which I have not been able to find in any book, old or new ; I confide it to you, by the Holy Ghost, on condition : 1. That you communicate it only to those persons who deserve it by their prayers, alms, mortifications, persecutions, and detachment from the world. 2. That you make use of it to become holy and heavenly, for this secret becomes great only in proportion to the use made of it by the soul ; beware, then, of remaining with your arms folded doing nothing : my secret would then become fatal to you, and would turn to your condemnation. 3. That you thank God, all the days of your life, for the grace He has given you in teaching you a secret which you do not deserve to know.

According to the extent of your use of this secret in the ordinary actions of your life will you understand its value and excellence, which at first you will but im

perfectly appreciate, on account of the multitude and grievousness of your sins, and your secret attachment to yourself.

Before going any further, and in order to restrain for a moment any natural and too eager desire to know this truth, say devoutly the *Ave Maris Stella* and the *Veni Creator*, in order to ask of God the grace to understand and relish this divine mystery.

On account of the little time I have for writing, and you for reading, I will say everything as briefly as possible.

Soul, living image of God, and redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, the will of God concerning you is that you should become holy like Him in this life, and glorious like Him in the next. The acquisition of the holiness of God is your sure vocation ; and it is to this that all your thoughts, words, and actions, all your sufferings, and all the movements of your life must tend ; or you will resist God, by not doing that for which He has created you, and is now preserving you. Oh, what an admirable work ! dust changed into light, dirt into purity, sin into holiness, the creature into its Creator, and man into God ! Admirable work, I repeat, but very difficult in itself.

and impossible to mere nature ; It is only God, who, by His grace, and His abundant and extraordinary grace, can bring it to pass ; the creation of the whole universe is not so great a masterpiece as this.

Soul, how will you act ? What means will you choose in order to ascend to where God is calling you ? The means of salvation and holiness are known to all ; they are marked in the Gospel, explained by the masters of the spiritual life, practised by the Saints, and are necessary to all those who wish to be saved, and to arrive at perfection ; they are : humility of heart, continual prayer, complete mortification, abandonment to the Providence of God, and conformity to the Will of God.

To practise these means of salvation and holiness, the grace of God is absolutely necessary, and this grace is given to all in greater or less measure ; for God, although infinitely good, does not give equally great grace to all, although He gives sufficient to each.

A soul faithful to God, with a great grace, will perform a great action, and with a weak grace, a small action ; It is the value and excellence of the grace given by God,

and corresponded to by the soul, which constitutes the value and excellence of our actions. These principles are incontestable. Everything, then, consists in finding an easy means of obtaining from God the necessary grace in order to become holy ; and it is this which I wish to teach you. Now, I say, that to find this grace of God we must find Mary, because :

1. It is Mary alone, who has found grace before God, both for herself and for every man in particular. The Patriarchs, and Prophets, and all the Saints of the Old Law could not find this grace.

2. It is Mary who has given being and life to the Author of all Grace ; and on this account she is called the Mother of grace, *Mater gratiæ*.

3. God the Father, from whom every good gift and perfect grace comes as from its essential source, in giving her His Son, has given her all His graces ; so that, as St. Bernard says, the Will of God has been given her in Him and with Him.

4. God has chosen her for the treasurer, steward, and dispenser of all His graces, so that all His graces and all His gifts pass through her hands ; and, accord'ng to the

power she has received over them, as St. Bernardine teaches, she gives to whom she wills, as she wills, and as much as she wills, the graces of the Eternal Father, the virtues of Jesus Christ, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

5. As in the natural order, a child must have a father and mother, so in the order of grace, a true child of the Church must have God for his Father and Mary for his Mother ; and if he glories in having God for his Father, without at the same time having a tender filial love for Mary, he is a deceiver, whose only father is the devil.

6. Since Mary has formed the head of the predestinate, who is Jesus Christ, it is also her office to form the members of this Head, that is to say, all true Christians ; for a mother does not form the head without the members, nor the members without the head. Whoever, then, wishes to be a member of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, must be formed in Mary by means of the grace of Jesus Christ, who resides in her in all His fulness, to be communicated, in the same fulness, to the true members of Jesus and the true children of Mary.

7. The Holy Ghost having espoused Mary, and having produced in her, and by her,

and of her, this masterpiece, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, and as He has never repudiated her, He continues to produce in her and by her, in a real though mysterious manner, His predestinate.

8. Mary has received from God a special dominion over souls, in order to nourish them and to make them grow up in God. St. Augustine even says that all the predestined are in the womb of Mary, and that they are not born, until the good Mother brings them forth into life eternal. Consequently, as the child draws all its nourishment from its mother, who gives it to it in proportion to its weakness, so, in like manner, do the predestined draw all their spiritual nourishment and all their strength from Mary.

9. It is to Mary that God the Father has said : *In Jacob inhabita* : My daughter, let thy dwelling be in Jacob," that is to say, in my elect, typified by Jacob. It is to Mary that God the Son has said, *In Israel hæreditarc* : "My dear Mother, let thine inheritance be in Israel," that is to say, in the predestined. Lastly, it is to Mary that the Holy Spirit has said : *In electis meis mitte radices*, "Strike thy roots, my faithful Spouse, in my elect." Whoever, then, is elect and predes-

Christ, never ceases in serious meditation has the Holy Virgin dwelling in him, that is to say, in his soul; he allows her to strike her roots in profound humility, in ardent charity, and in all virtues.

10. Mary is called by St. Augustine, and is, indeed, the living mould of God, *forma Dei*; that is to say, it is in her alone, that the God-Man was naturally formed, without losing any feature, so to speak, of His Godhead; and it is also in her alone that man can be, properly and in a lifelike way, formed into God, so far as human nature is capable of this, by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Now, a sculptor may, out of some hard and shapeless material, make a statue or likeness from nature in two ways: 1. By making use of his skill, his strength, his knowledge, and good instruments; 2. By casting it in a mould. The first way is long and difficult, and subject to many accidents: it often happens that a mere blow of the hammer or chisel, awkwardly given, is enough to spoil the whole work. The second way is quick, easy, and gentle, without trouble or expense, provided the mould be perfect, and a good natural likeness, and the material used offer no resistance to the hand.

Mary is the great mould of God, made by the Holy Ghost, in order to form a God-Man by the Hypostatic Union, and a Man-God by grace.

In this mould, no feature of the Godhead is wanting ; whoever is cast in it, and allows himself to be freely handled, receives therein all the features of Jesus Christ. Who is True God. And this is done in a gentle manner, in proportion to his human weakness, without much agony or labour ; in a sure manner, without fear of illusion, for the devil has never had, and never will have, access to Mary ; and lastly, in a holy and spotless manner, without the shadow of the least stain of sin. Oh ! what a difference there is between a soul formed in Jesus Christ by the ordinary ways ; that is to say, by trusting, like the sculptor, to mere natural skill and ingenuity, and a soul thoroughly tractable, really detached. And well molten, which, without in any way leaning upon itself, suffers itself to be cast in Mary, and to be handled by the Holy Ghost ! How many stains, how many defects, how many illusions, how much darkness, how much of what is merely natural and human, is there in the first soul ; and

how pure, how divine, how like to Jesus Christ, is the second !

There is not, nor will there ever be, a creature in which God is greater, outside Himself, than the divine Mary, not excepting either the Saints, or the Cherubim, or the highest Seraphim, in Paradise itself. Mary is the Paradise of God and His unspeakable world, into which the Son of God has gone to work His marvels, to keep it, and to take His pleasure therein. He has made a world for man in his state of pilgrimage, which is that on which we dwell. He has made a world for man in a state of blessedness, which is heaven ; but He has made another world for Himself, to which He has given the name of Mary ; a world almost unknown to mortals here below, and incomprehensible to the Angels and the blessed, who, in heaven, are so filled with admiration at seeing God so exalted, so far away from all of them, so separated and hidden in His world, the divine Mary, that they cry out without ceasing, Holy, holy, holy !

Happy, a thousand times happy here below, is the soul to which the Holy Ghost reveals the Secret of Mary ; to which He opens this " garden enclosed ", permitting it

to enter it ; to which He gives access to this "sealed fountain", suffering it to draw from it, and to drink deeply of the living waters of grace ! Such a soul will find God alone without any creature, in this most sweet creature ; God, infinitely holy and exalted, but, at the same time, infinitely condescending and proportioned to, its weakness. Since God is everywhere, He may be found everywhere, even in hell ; but there is no place in which the creature can find Him nearer to himself, and more proportioned to his weakness, than in Mary, for it was for this end that He came down into her bosom. Everywhere else He is the Bread of the strong, the Bread of Angels, but in Mary He is the Bread of children.

Let no one imagine, then, as some do who are deceived by false lights, that Mary being a creature, is a hindrance to union with the Creator ; it is no longer Mary who lives, it is Jesus Christ ; it is God Alone who lives in her. Her transformation into God surpasses that of St. Paul, and the other saints, as heaven is higher than the earth. Mary was made only for God ; and far from her detaining in herself a soul which casts itself upon her bosom, she, on the contrary, casts it immediately upon God,

and unites it to Him with so much the more perfection, as the soul is more united to her. Mary is the marvellous echo of God, who, when we say "Mary," answers only "God;" who, when with St. Elizabeth, we call her Blessed, glorifies only God. If the falsely illuminated, who have been miserably led away by the devil, even in prayer, had known how to find Mary, and by Mary, Jesus, they would never have had such terrible falls.

When we have once found Mary, and, by Mary, Jesus, and, by Jesus, God the Father, we have found all good things say holy souls: *Inventa*, etc. Who says *all* excepts nothing: all grace and all friendship with God; all safety against the enemies of God; all truth as opposed to falsehood; all facility and complete victory over the difficulties of salvation: all sweetness and all joy amidst the bitterness of life.

Not that he who has found Mary, by true devotion, will be exempt from crosses and sufferings: far from it, he is more assailed by them than any other, because Mary, being the Mother of the living, gives to her children pieces of the Tree of Life, which is the Cross of Jesus; but in choosing their special crosses, she obtains for them the

grace to carry them with patience, and even with joy, so that the crosses which she gives to those who belong to her are rather sweet than bitter crosses. Or, if for awhile they feel the bitterness of the chalice which they must drink in order to be the friends of God, the consolation and joy which this good mother gives after this sorrow, encourages them exceedingly to carry still heavier and more bitter crosses.

The difficulty, then, is to know how, in reality, to find the divine Mary, in order to find all abundant grace. God, being absolute Master, can communicate by Himself that which, ordinarily, He communicates only by Mary; we cannot even deny, without rashness, that sometimes He does so; nevertheless, according to the order established by Divine Wisdom, as St. Thomas teaches, He communicates Himself, ordinarily, to men only through Mary in the order of grace: we must, therefore, in order to ascend and unite ourselves to Him, make use of the same means, as He did to come down to us, to become man, and to communicate to us His graces. The means then to find grace, and abundant grace, is a true devotion to Mary.

But it must be remarked that there are several kinds of true devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, for here I do not speak of false devotions.

The first consists in fulfilling the duties of a Christian, avoiding mortal sin, acting more from love than from fear, praying from time to time to the Blessed Virgin and honouring her as the Mother of God, without having any special devotion towards her.

The second consists in having for the Blessed Virgin, feelings of the most perfect esteem and love, and confidence and veneration. It leads us to join her confraternities, to recite her chaplet and Rosary, to honour her images and altars, to publish her praises, and to enrol ourselves in her congregations. If, while doing this, we keep from sin, this devotion is good, holy, and praiseworthy ; but it is not so perfect as the following one, nor so capable of withdrawing souls from creatures, nor of detaching them from themselves, in order to unite them with Jesus Christ.

The third, known and practised by very few, is that which I am about to reveal to you, predestined souls. It consists *in giving*

ourselves up entirely to the Most Blessed Virgin, in order to belong wholly to Jesus Christ through her ; and then, in doing all our actions with Mary, in Mary, through Mary, for Mary. In order to do them more perfectly with Jesus, in Jesus, through Jesus, and for Jesus, our Last End.

I shall now explain these words.

In order to practise this excellent devotion, we should first choose some remarkable feast, (1) on which to consecrate ourselves wholly to Jesus through Mary ; giving her our body and our soul ; *our body with all its members and all its senses ; our soul with all its powers ; our exterior goods of fortune ; our interior goods of soul ; that is to say, our merits, our graces, our virtues, our good works, past, present, or future ;* in a word, all that we have or may have in the order of nature, of grace, or of glory ; and that without any reserve, not even of a farthing, a hair, nor the least good action ; and that for all eternity, without looking for any other recompense than the honour of belonging to Jesus Christ through her and in her, even if this divine Queen were not, as she

(1) For instance, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, March 25th.

always is, the most generous, and the most grateful of creatures. (1)

It must be here observed that, by this devotion, the soul sacrifices to Jesus, through Mary, all that it holds most dear, and that of which not even any religious order would require the sacrifice; namely, the right of disposing of the value of our prayers, alms, and mortifications, so as to leave the entire disposal of them to the Blessed Virgin, to be applied, as she wills, to the greater glory of God, which she alone perfectly knows.

We leave at her disposal all the satisfactory, and impetratory value of our good works; so that, after having made this oblation, though without vow, we are no longer masters of the good we do; the Blessed Virgin may apply it, either to the relief or deliverance of a soul in Purgatory or to the conversion of a poor sinner, etc.

By this devotion, we also place our merits in the hands of the Blessed Virgin; not that she may give them to others; this, properly speaking, cannot be done, but that she may keep them, augment them, and embellish them. We give her all our prayers and

(1) See Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

good works, in so far as they are impetratory and satisfactory, to distribute and apply them to whom she pleases; and if, after having thus consecrated ourselves to her, we desire to relieve the souls in Purgatory, to convert sinners or to help our friends by our prayers, alms, mortifications, or sacrifices, we must humbly ask it of her, and leave everything to her good pleasure, without knowing anything further, but being fully persuaded that the value of our actions, dispensed by the same hand, which God make use of to distribute to us His graces and gifts, cannot fail to be applied to His greater glory.

I have said that this devotion consists in our giving ourselves to Mary in the quality of slaves.

Now there are three kinds of slavery: the first is the slavery of nature; all men, good and bad, are the slaves of God in this sense. The second is the slavery of constraint; the devils and the damned are slaves of God in this second sense. The third is the slavery of love and of the will; and it is in this sense that we ought to consecrate ourselves to God, by Mary, as being the most perfect way in which a creature can possibly give himself to his Creator.

Remember that there is a great difference between a servant and a slave ; a servant expects wages for his service, a slave does not. A servant is free to leave his master, when he likes, he serves him only for a time ; a slave cannot justly leave his master, he belongs to him for his whole life. A master has not the power of life and death over his servant, but he has over his slave, he could put him to death and not be molested by justice. Christians do not make this kind of slaves, only Turks and idolaters do. Happy, a thousand times happy, the generous soul who consecrates herself entirely to Jesus, through Mary, as a loving slave after having, by baptism, shaken off the tyrannical slavery of the devil !

WONDERFUL EFFECTS OF THIS PERFECT CON-
SECRATION.

I would require much light from God, in order to describe perfectly the excellence of this practice : I will only say :

1. That to give ourselves, in this way, to Jesus through Mary, is to imitate God the Father, who has given us His Son only through Mary, and Who communicates His

grace to us only through Mary ; it is to imitate God the Son, who has come to us only through Mary, and who, having set us the example to act as He acted, has asked us to go to Him by the same means, that is to say, through Mary ; it is to imitate God the Holy Ghost who communicates His graces and gifts to us, only through Mary. Is it not right, says St. Bernard, that grace should return to its Author, through the same channel that transmitted it to us ?

2. That to go in this way to Jesus through Mary is truly to honour Jesus Christ, because it shows that, on account of our sins, we are not worthy to approach His infinite Holiness directly and by ourselves, and that we have need of Mary, His Holy Mother, to be our advocate and mediatrix with Him who is our Mediator. It is, at the same time, to approach Him as our Mediator and our Brother, and to humble ourselves before Him, as our God and our Judge : in a word, it is to practise humility, which is always exceedingly pleasing to the Heart of God.

3. That to consecrate ourselves in this way to Jesus through Mary, is to place in the hands of Mary, or good actions, which, however good they may appear, are very

often spoiled, and unworthy of the sight or acceptance of God, before whom the stars are not pure. Ah ! let us pray to our dear Mother and Mistress, that having received our poor present, she may purify, sanctify, and embellish it, so as to render it worthy of God. The entire revenue of our soul is of less value to gain the friendship and grace of our Heavenly Father than would be a worm-eaten apple in the hands of some poor peasant who rents a farm from the king. What would this poor man do, if he had common sense, and access to the queen ? Would he not give her the apple, and would not the queen, out of kindness to the poor peasant and respect for the king, remove from it all that was worm-eaten, and present it on a golden plate decked with flowers ; and could the king refuse to accept it, even with joy, from the hands of the queen who thus favoured the poor peasant ? *Modicum quid offerre desideras, manibus Marlæ tradere cura, si non vis sustinere repulsam.* “ If you wish to offer anything to God,” says St. Bernard, “ place it in Mary’s hands, unless you wish it to be refused.”

Great God, how little is all that we can do ! But let us, by this devotion, place it

all in Mary's hands. As we shall have given ourselves entirely to her, despoiling ourselves of everything in her honour, she will be infinitely more generous towards us, and will repay us a hundred fold. She will communicate herself wholly to us with her merits and her virtues ; she will place our presents on the golden plate of her charity ; she will clothe us, as Rebecca clothed Jacob, with the beautiful garments of her Son, Jesus Christ, that is to say, with His merits, of which she has the entire disposal ; and thus, as her privileged servants, after having despoiled ourselves of everything in her honour, we shall be clad in double garments : *Ommes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus* : the garments, ornaments, perfumes, merits, and virtues of Jesus and of Mary.

That to give ourselves thus to the Blessed Virgin, is to practise charity to our neighbour in the highest possible degree, for it is to give to Mary all that we hold most dear, in order that she may dispose of it at her good pleasure in favour of the living and the dead.

That by this devotion we place our graces and merits in safe-keeping, for Mary is their guardian. We may say to her with confi-

dence : " See, my dear Mother, my kind Mistress, here is the good, which, by the grace of thy dear Son, I have been enabled to do ; I am not able to keep it, because of my weakness and inconstancy, and because of the number and malice of my enemies, who ceaselessly attack me.

Alas ! I see, every day, the cedars of Lebanon falling into the mire, and the eagles which had raised themselves to the Sun become birds of night ; I see a thousand even of the just fall on my left hand, and ten thousand on my right. Ah ! my powerful, my most powerful princess, do thou hold me lest I fall ; do thou keep all my good, lest I be robbed of it ; all I have I confide to thee, in trust. *Depositum custodi.—Scio cui credidi.* " I know whom I have trusted, I know well who thou art, this is why I entrust myself entirely to thee ; thou art faithful and true to God and to men, and thou wilt not suffer anything to perish of that which I entrust to thee ; thou art powerful, and nothing can hurt thee nor take from thee what thou holdest in thy hands.

Ipsam sequens non devias ; ipsam rogans non desperas ; ipsam cogitans non erras ; ipsam tenente, non corruis ; ipsam protegente, non me-

tuis,; ipsâ duce, non fatigaris ; ipsâ propitiâ pervenis. (S. Bernard. Inter flores. cap. 135. de Maria, Virgine, p. 2150.)—(“ When you follow Mary, you will not go astray ; when you pray to her, you will not despair ; when you think of her, you will make no mistake ; when she holds you up, you will not fall ; when she protects you, you need not fear ; under her guidance you will not be tired ; under her favour, you will arrive at your journey’s end, and at the harbour of safety.”) And again : “ *Detinet Filium ne percutiat ; detinet diabolum, ne noceat ; detinet virtutes ne fugiant, detinet merita ne percut ; detinet gratias ne effluent.*” (She keeps her Son from striking us ; she keeps the devil from hurting us ; she keeps our virtues from escaping ; she keeps our merits from being destroyed ; she keeps our graces from being lost.) These are the words of St. Bernard, and they express in substance all that I have said.

Were there only this one motive to incite me to this devotion,—that it is a sure means of keeping me in the grace of God, and even of augmenting it in me, I ought to ardently desire it.

That this devotion bestows upon us truly the liberty of the children of God. As, for

the love of Mary, we have of our own free will reduced ourselves to slavery, so this dear Mistress, out of gratitude, enlarges and dilates our heart, and causes us to walk with giant steps in the way of God's commandments. Ordinarily, she frees the soul from weariness, sadness, and scruples. It was this devotion that our Lord taught to the Venerable Mother Agnes of Jesus, as a sure means of deliverance from the sufferings and perplexities with which she was afflicted. "Make thyself," said He, "my Mother's slave:" she did so, and her troubles ceased at once.

Were we to give all the authorities for this devotion, we should have to make mention of Bulls and Indulgences of Popes, of pastoral letters of bishops in its favour, of confraternities established in its honour, of examples of saints and illustrious persons who have practised it; but all this we pass over in silence.

I said, in the second place, that this devotion consists in doing all our actions *with* Mary *in* Mary, *by* Mary, and *for* Mary. It is not enough to have given ourselves once to Jesus, through Mary: it is not enough to do this every month, or every week; this would be too transient a devotion, nor

would it raise the soul to perfection. It is very easy to enrol ourselves in a confraternity, to embrace outwardly the devotion of which I am speaking, to say a few vocal prayers every day, as prescribed ; *But the great difficulty is to enter into the spirit of this devotion, which is to make a soul interiorly dependent upon the Blessed Virgin, and upon Jesus through her.* There are many persons, who, with admirable zeal, have made the outward consecration ; but few have acquired its spirit, and still fewer have persevered in it.

1. The essential practice of this devotion consists in doing all our actions *with Mary*, that is to say, in taking the Blessed Virgin as the perfect model of all we have to do. Therefore, before undertaking anything, we must renounce ourselves, and our own ideas, however good they may be. We must annihilate ourselves before God, as being incapable of any supernatural good, or even of any action profitable to salvation ; we must have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, and unite ourselves with her and with her intentions, though they are unknown to us ; we must unite ourselves, through Mary, to the intentions of Jesus Christ, that is to say, we must place ourselves as instruments

in the hands of the Blessed Virgin, that she may act in us, and for us, and do with us what she pleases, to the greater glory of her Son, and by her Son, Jesus Christ, to the glory of the Father ; so that we must not undertake any kind of interior life, or perform any spiritual action except in dependence upon her.

2. We must do all our actions *in Mary*, that is to say, we must accustom ourselves little by little to interior recollection, in order to form some little idea or spiritual image of the Holy Virgin : she will be to us an *oratory* in which we can offer up all our prayers to God, without fear of being repulsed ; a *Tower of David* to secure us from all enemies ; a *lamp* to enlighten us, and to inflame us with the love of God ; a *sacred monstrance* in which we can see God in her and with her. In a word, Mary will be to us our all before God, and our universal refuge. If we pray, we shall pray in Mary ; if we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we shall place Him in Mary, so that He may take His delight in her. Mary will receive Him lovingly, will enthrone Him honorably, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace Him closely, and will render Him, in spirit and in truth, worship,

which, in our blindness, is unknown to us. If we act, we shall act in Mary ; if we rest, we shall rest in Mary ; and everywhere and in all things we shall make acts of self-renunciation.

3. Again, we must never go to Jesus, except *through Mary*, through her intercession and power with Him ; never being alone to pray to Him.

4. Lastly, we must do all our actions *for Mary*, that is to say, having given all to this august Princess, it is only right that we should do everything for her, that we should no longer work, except for her, for her interests and her glory ; not that we take her for our last end, which can only be Jesus Christ, but for our proximate end, and as an easy means by which to go to Jesus. We must, then, in everything we do, renounce our self-love, which is often imperceptible, and say from the bottom of our heart, "O my dear Mistress, it is for thee and for thy love that I go here or there, that I do this or that; that I suffer this pain or that wrong !"

Beware, predestinate soul, of believing that it is more perfect to go straight to Jesus, straight to God in your actions and intentions ; if you go to Him without Mary, your actions will be of little value

but when you go to Him by Mary, it is Mary who works in you and consequently your actions will be highly exalted and very worthy of God.

More than this, beware of doing violence to yourself, in order to taste and feel what you are doing; say and do everything in that pure faith, which Mary had on earth, and which she will communicate to you in good time; leave to your sovereign, poor little slave, the clear sight of God, the transports, the joys, the pleasures, the riches of heaven, and take for yourself only pure faith, full of disgust, distractions, weariness, and dryness; say, "Amen, whatever Mary, my mistress, does in heaven, so let it be!"

Oh! take great care, once more, not to torment yourself, should you not immediately enjoy the sweet presence of the Blessed Virgin in your interior; this grace is not given to all, and when God, out of His great mercy, favours a soul with this grace it is very easy to lose it, unless she be faithful in frequent self-denial; but should this misfortune happen to you, return quietly, and make honourable amends to your Sovereign.

Experience will teach you infinitely more than I can tell you, and you will find, if

you are faithful to the little which I have taught you, so many rich graces in this practice, that you will be surprised, and filled full of joy. Let us labour, then, dear soul, and let us act in such a way, that by the faithful practice of this devotion, the soul of Mary may be in us to glorify our Lord, and that the spirit of Mary may be in us to rejoice in God our Saviour. These are the words of St. Ambrose : "*Sit in singulis anima Mariæ ut magnificet Dominum, sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ ut exultet in Deo.*" And let us not think that there was more glory and happiness in dwelling in Abraham's bosom, which was called Paradise, than in the bosom of Mary, in which God has placed His throne. These are the words of learned Abbot Gueric : "*Ne credideris majoris esse felicitatis habitare in sinu Abrahamæ, qui Paradisus, quam in Sinu Mariæ in quo Dominus posuit thronum suum.*"

This devotion, faithfully practised, produces an infinite number of happy results. When the life of Mary is well established in the soul, it is, as it were, no longer the soul that lives, it is Mary who lives in it ; the soul of Mary takes its place, so to speak. But when, by an unspeakable but real grace, Mary becomes really Queen of a soul, what

marvels does she not accomplish ! She works there in secret, without even the knowledge of the soul, for were the soul to know, it would destroy the beauty of Mary's works.

As Mary is ever the fruitful Virgin, she always brings with her purity of heart and body, purity of intention, and fruitfulness in good works. Do not think, dear child, that Mary, the most fruitful of all pure creatures and who went so far as to produce a God-Man, remains idle in a faithful soul. She will make it live unceasingly for Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in it. *Filioli mei quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis.* (Ad. Gal. IV. 19).

If Jesus Christ is as much the fruit of Mary for each particular soul, as for the whole world in general, it is especially for the soul in which the Divine Virgin dwells, that Jesus Christ is her fruit and her masterpiece. Lastly, Mary becomes all things to this soul with Jesus Christ, she enlightens her mind by her pure faith ; she deepens her heart by her humility, she enlarges and inflames it by her love, she purifies it by her purity, she ennobles and enlarges it by her maternity. But where am I to stop ? It is experience alone that can teach the marvels of Mary, marvels beyond the belief

of the wise and the proud, and even of the generality of devout souls .

As it is by Mary that God came into the world the first time, in humiliation and annihilation, may we not also say, that it is by Mary that God will come a second time, as the whole Church expects, to reign over all and to judge the living and the dead ? How and when this shall be done, who can tell ? But I know well, that God, whose thoughts are as far removed from our thoughts as heaven is from earth, will come in the time and manner least expected by men, even the most learned and the most enlightened in the knowledge of Holy Writ which is very obscure on this subject.

We may also believe that, towards the end of time, and perhaps sooner than we think, God will raise up great men filled with the Holy Ghost, and entirely devoted to the service of Mary, by whom this great Queen will work wonders in the world. In order to destroy sin, and establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ, her Son, upon the ruins of the kingdom of this corrupt world ; and it is by means of this devotion to the most Holy Virgin, of which I do but give the outlines, and which I only lessen

by my feebleness, that these holy men will accomplish everything.

Besides the interior practices of this devotion, which we have just described, there are also certain exterior practices, which we must neither omit nor neglect.

EXTERIOR PRACTICES OF THIS PERFECT CONSECRATION.

The first practice is, as we have already said, to give ourselves to Jesus, on some remarkable feast, through Mary, to receive Holy Communion for this intention, to spend the day in prayer, and to renew this consecration at least every year, on the anniversary of this day.

The second is to pay to the Blessed Virgin every year, on the same day, some little tribute, as a token of our servitude and dependence. Such has always been the homage of slaves towards their masters. This tribute may be either a mortification, an aim, a pilgrimage or some prayers; the Blessed Marino, as we are told by his brother, St. Peter Damian, took the discipline publicly every year on the same day, before an altar of the Blessed Virgin. We neither ask for nor

counsel such fervour ; but, if we do not give much to Mary, we ought, at least, to offer what we give her with very humble and very grateful hearts.

The third is to celebrate every year, with more than ordinary devotion, the feast of the Annunciation, which is the chief feast of this devotion, and which has been established in order that we may honour and imitate the dependence in which the Eternal Word placed Himself on that day for the love of us.

The fourth is to say every day, without however thinking ourselves obliged to do so under pain of sin, *the little Crown of the Blessed Virgin*, composed of *three Our Fathers* and *twelve Hail Marys*, to recite often the *Magnificat*, (see page 276), which is the only hymn of Mary we have, in order to thank God for His benefits, and to obtain new favors ; above all not to fail to say it in thanksgiving after Holy Communion, as the learned Gerson tells us, that the Blessed Virgin recited it very often herself, and particularly after Holy Communion.

The learned Benzonius, in his explanation of the *Magnificat*, tells of several miracles wrought through its power : he says that the devils tremble and flee away when they

hear the words : *Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.*

The fifth is to say devoutly the Hail Mary. The faithful slaves of Jesus in Mary should love to recite this prayer often ; neither its value and merit, nor its excellence and necessity are sufficiently known. The Hail Mary is a heavenly dew which waters the soul, and renders it fruitful in all virtues ; a soul not watered by this prayer, brings forth no fruit, nothing but briars and thorns.

Predestined souls, slaves of Jesus in Mary, know that the Hail Mary is the most beautiful of all prayers after the Our Father ; it is the most perfect compliment you can pay to Mary, because it is the greeting which the Most High sent her by an Archangel to win her heart. The Hail Mary well said chases away the devil ; it crushes him like a hammer. The Hail Mary is the sanctification of the soul, the joy of the Angels, the song of the predestined, the canticle of the New Testament, the pleasure of Mary, the glory of the most holy Trinity. The Hail Mary is a loving kiss we give to Mary ; it is a brilliant rose we present to her ; a precious pearl we offer her ; a cup of ambrosia and divine nectar

we give her. All these comparisons are made by the Saints.

I, therefore, beg you most earnestly, by the love I bear you in Jesus and Mary, not to be satisfied with reciting the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, but also to say the beads, and even, if you have time, the Rosary every day. Do so, and, at the hour of your death, you will bless the day and the hour when you believed me; and after having sown under the blessings of Jesus and Mary, you will reap eternal blessings in heaven; *Qui seminet in benedictionibus de benedictionibus, et metet.*

INTRODUCTION.

It is by the most holy Virgin Mary that Jesus has come into the world, and it is also by her that He has to reign in the world.

Mary has been singularly hidden during her life. It is on this account that the Holy Ghost and the Church call her *alma Mater—Mother secret and hidden*. Her humility was so profound that she had no propensity on earth more powerful or more unintermitting than that of hiding herself, even from herself, as well as from every other creature, so as to be known to God only. He heard her prayers to Him, when she begged to be hidden, to be humbled, and to be treated as in all respects poor and of no account. He took pleasure in hiding her from all human creatures in her conception, in her birth, in her life, and in her resurrection and assumption. Her parents even did not know her, and the Angels often asked of

each other : *Quæ est ista ?* Who is that ? Because the Most High either hid her from them, or if He revealed anything of her to them, it was nothing compared to what He kept undisclosed.

God the Father consented that she should do no miracle, at least no public one, during her life, although He had given her the power. God the Son consented that she should hardly ever speak, though He had communicated His wisdom to her. God the Holy Ghost, though she was His faithful Spouse, consented that His Apostles and Evangelists should speak but very little of her, and no more than was necessary to make Jesus Christ known.

Mary is the excellent masterpiece of the Most High, of which He has reserved to Himself both the knowledge and the possession. Mary is the admirable Mother of the Son, who took pleasure in humbling and concealing her during her life, in order to favour her humility, calling her by the name of *woman (mulier)*, as if she was a stranger, although in His heart He esteemed and loved her above all angels and all men. Mary is the sealed fountain and the faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost, to

whom He alone has entrance. Mary is the sanctuary and the repose of the Holy Trinity, where God dwells more magnificently and more divinely than in any other place in the universe, without excepting His dwelling between the Cherubim and Seraphim. Neither is it allowed to any creature, no matter how pure, to enter into that sanctuary without a great and special privilege.

I say with the Saints, The divine Mary is the terrestrial Paradise of the New Adam, where He is incarnate by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in order to work there incomprehensible marvels. She is the grand and divine World of God, where there are beauties and treasures unspeakable. She is the magnificence of the Most High, where He has hidden, as in her bosom, His only Son, and in Him all that is most excellent and most precious. Oh, what grand and hidden things that mighty God has wrought in this admirable creature! How has she herself been compelled to say it, in spite of her profound humility: *Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est!*—"He that is mighty hath done great things to me." The world knows them not, because it is at once incapable and unworthy of such knowledge.

The Saints have said admirable things of this Holy City of God : and, as they themselves avow, they have never been more eloquent and more content than when they have spoken of her. Yet, after all they have said, they cry out that the height of her merits which she has raised up to the throne of the Divinity, cannot be fully seen ; that the breadth of her charity, which is broader than the earth, is in truth immeasurable ; that the grandeur of her power, which she exercises even over God Himself, is incomprehensible ; and finally, that the depth of her humility, and of all her virtues and graces, is an abyss which never can be sounded.

O height incomprehensible ! O breadth unspeakable ! O grandeur immeasurable ! O abyss impenetrable ! Every day, from one end of the earth to the other, in the highest heights of the heavens and in the profoundest depths of the abysses, everything preaches, everything publishes, the admirable Mary ! The nine choirs of Angels, men of all ages, sexes, conditions, and religions, good or bad, nay, even the devils themselves, willingly or unwillingly, are compelled by the force of truth to call her Blessed.

St. Bonaveture tells us that all the Angels in heaven cry out incessantly to her, *Sancta, sancta, sancta Maria, Dei Genitrix et Virgo*—“Holy, holy, holy Mary, Mother of God and Virgin;” and that they offer to her millions and millions of times a day the Angelical Salutation, *Ave Maria*; prostrating themselves before her, and begging of her in her graciousness to honour them with some of her commands.

St. Michael, as St. Augustine says, although the prince of all the heavenly court, is the most zealous in honouring her and causing her to be honoured, while he waits always in expectation that he may have the honour to go at her bidding to render service to some one of her servants.

The whole earth is full of her glory, especially among Christians, amongst whom she is taken as the protectress of many kingdoms, provinces, dioceses, and cities. Numbers of cathedrals are consecrated to God under her name. There is not a church without an altar in her honour, not a country or a canton where there are not some miraculous images, where all sorts of evil are cured, and all sorts of good gifts obtained. Who can count the confraternities

and congregations in her honour? How many religious orders have been founded in her name and under her protection? What numbers there are of Brothers and Sisters of all these confraternities, and of religious men and women of all these orders, who publish her praises and confess her mercies! There is not a little child who, as it lisps the Ave Maria, does not praise her. There is scarcely a sinner who, even in his obduracy, has not some spark of confidence in her. Nay, the very devils in hell respect her while they fear her.

After that we must surely say with the Saints, *De Maria nunquam satis*—"Of Mary there is never enough;" we have not yet praised, exalted, honoured, loved, and served Mary as we ought to do. She has deserved still more praise, still more respect, still more love, and far more service.

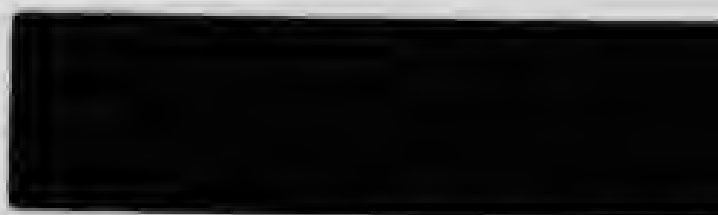
After that we must say with the Holy Ghost, *Omnis gloria filice Regis ab intus*—"All the glory of the King's daughter is within." It is as if all the outward glory, which heaven and earth rival each other in laying at her feet, is nothing in comparison with that which she receives within from the Creator, and which is not known by crea-

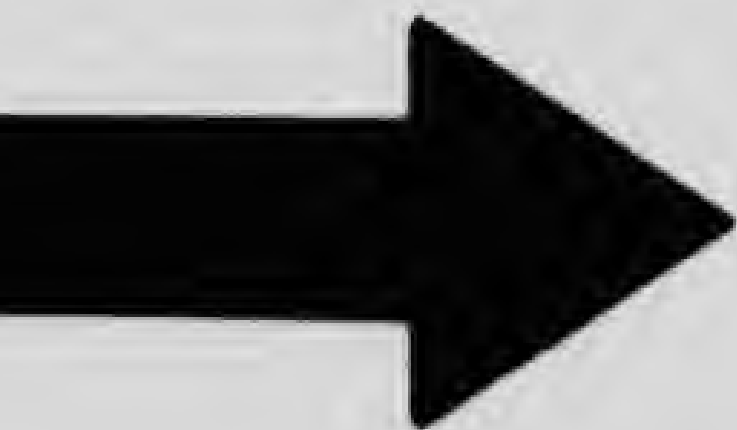
tures, who in their littleness are unable to penetrate the secret of the secrets of the King.

After that we must cry out with the Apostle, *Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit*—"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart comprehended," the beauties, the grandeurs, the excellences of Mary—the miracle of the miracles of grace, of nature, and of glory.

If you wish to comprehend the Mother, says a Saint, comprehend the Son ; for she is the worthy Mother of God. *Hic taceat omnis lingua*—"Here let every tongue be mute."

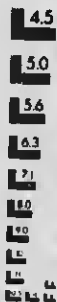
It is with a particular joy that my heart has dictated what I have just written, in order to show that the divine Mary has been *up to this time unknown*, and that this is one of the reasons that Jesus Christ is not known as He ought to be. If, then, as is certain, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is to come into the world, it will be but a necessary consequence of the knowledge of the kingdom of the most holy Virgin Mary, who brought Him into the world the first time, and will make His second advent full of splendour.





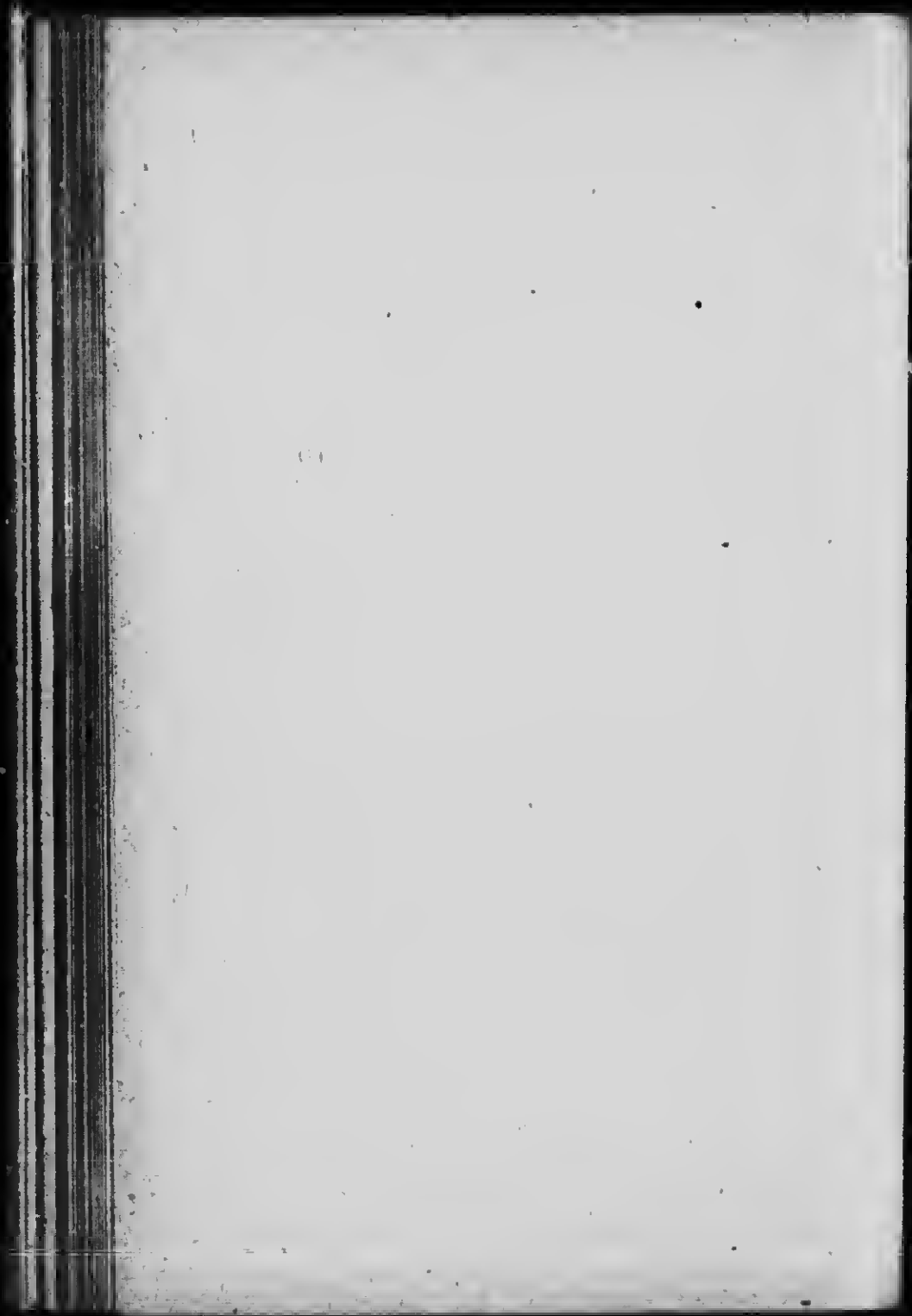
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TRUE DEVOTION
TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN.

PART FIRST.

ON DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY
IN GENERAL.

I.—EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF DEVOTION
TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

I AVOW, with all the Church, that Mary, being but a mere creature that has come from the hands of the Most High, is, in comparison with His infinite Majesty, less than an atom ; or rather she is nothing at all, because He only is "He who is," and thus by consequence that grand Lord, always independent and sufficient to Himself, never had, and has not now, any absolute

need of the Holy Virgin for the accomplishment of His will and for the manifestation of His glory. He has but to will, in order to do everything. Nevertheless I say that, things being supposed as they are now. God having willed to commence and to complete His greatest works by the most holy Virgin, since He created her, we may well think He will not change His conduct in the eternal ages ; for He is God, and He changes not either in His sentiments or in His conduct.

God the Father has not given His Only-begotten to the world except by Mary. Whatever sighs the patriarchs may have sent forth—whatever prayers the prophets and the saints of the ancient law may have offered up to obtain that treasure for full four thousand years—it was but Mary that merited it ; it was but Mary who found grace before God by the force of her prayers and the eminence of her virtues. The world was unworthy, says St. Augustine, to receive the Son of God immediately from the Father's hands. He has given Him to Mary in order that the world might receive Him through her. The Son of God has made Himself Man ; but it was in

Mary and by Mary. God the Holy Ghost has formed Jesus Christ in Mary; but it was only after having asked her consent by one of the first ministers of His court.

God the Father has communicated to Mary His fruitfulness, as far as a mere creature was capable of it, in order that He might give her the power to produce His Son, and all the members of His mystical Body. God the Son has descended into her virginal womb, as the new Adam into the terrestrial paradise, to take His pleasure there, and to work in secret the marvels of His grace.

God made Man has found His liberty in seeing Himself imprisoned in her womb. He has made His Omnipotence shine forth in letting Himself be carried by that blessed Virgin. He has found His glory and His Father's in hiding His splendours from all creatures here below, and revealing them to Mary only. He has glorified His Independence and His Majesty, in depending on that sweet Virgin, in His Conception, in His Birth, in His Presentation in the Temple, in His Hidden Life of thirty years, and even in His Death, where she was to be present, in order that He might

make with her but one same sacrifice, and be immolated to the Eternal Father by her consent; just as Isaac of old was offered by Abraham's consent to the Will of God. It is she who has suckled Him, nourished Him, supported Him, brought Him up, and then sacrificed Him for us.

O admirable and incomprehensible dependence of a God, which the Holy Ghost could not pass in silence in the Gospel, although He has hidden from us nearly all the admirable things which that Incarnate Wisdom did in His Hidden Life, as if He would enable us, by His revelation of that at least, to understand something of its price! Jesus Christ gave more glory to God the Father by submission to His Mother during those thirty years than He would have given Him in converting the whole world by the working of the most stupendous miracles. Oh, how highly we glorify God, when, to please Him, we submit ourselves to Mary, after the example of Jesus Christ, our Sole Exemplar!

If we examine narrowly the rest of our Blessed Lord's Life, we shall see that it was His Will to begin His miracles by Mary. He sanctified St. John in the womb

of St. Elizabeth his mother; but it was by Mary's word. No sooner had she spoken than John was sanctified; and this was His first and greatest miracle of grace. At the marriage at Cana He changed the water into wine; but it was at Mary's humble prayer; and this was His first miracle of nature. He has begun and continued His miracles by Mary, and He will continue them to the end of ages by Mary also.

God the Holy Ghost being barren in God—that is to say, not producing another Divine Person—is become fruitful by Mary, whom He has espoused. It is with her, in her, and of her, that He has produced His Masterpiece, which is a God made Man, and whom He goes on producing in the persons of His members daily to the end of the world. The predestinate are the members of that Adorable Head. This is the reason why He, the Holy Ghost, the more He finds Mary, His dear and indissoluble Spouse, in any soul, becomes the more active and mighty in producing Jesus Christ in that soul, and that soul in Jesus Christ.

It is not that we may say that our Bless-

ed Lady gives the Holy Ghost His fruitfulness, as if He had it not Himself. For inasmuch as He is God He has the same fruitfulness or capacity of producing as the Father and the Son, only that He does not bring it into action, as He does not produce another Divine Person. But what we want to say is, that the Holy Ghost chose to make use of our Blessed Lady, though He had no absolute need of her, to bring His fruitfulness into action, by producing in her and by her Jesus Christ in His members; *a mystery of grace unknown to even the wisest and most spiritual among Christians.*

The conduct which the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity have deigned to pursue in the Incarnation and first coming of Jesus Christ, They still pursue daily in an invisible manner throughout the whole Church, and They will still pursue it even to the consummation of ages in the last coming of Jesus Christ.

God the Father made an assemblage of all the waters, and He named it the sea (*mare*). He has made an assemblage of all His graces, and He has called it Mary (*Maria*). This great God has a most rich

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treasury in which He has laid up all that He has of beauty, of splendour, of rarity, and of preciousness, even to His own Son; and this immense treasury is none other than Mary, whom the Saints have named the Treasure of the Lord, out of whose plentitude all men are made rich.

God the Son has communicated to His Mother all that He has acquired by His Life and His Death, His infinite merits and His admirable virtues; and He has made her the treasurers of all that His Father has given Him for His inheritance. It is by her that He applies His merits to His members, and that He communicates His virtues, and distributes His graces. She is His mysterious canal; she is His aqueduct, through which He makes His mercies flow gently and abundantly.

To Mary, His faithful Spouse, God the Holy Ghost has communicated His unspeakable gifts; and He has chosen her to be the dispensatrix of all He possesses, in such sort that *she distributes to whom she wills, as much as she wills, as she wills, and when she wills, all His gifts and graces.* The Holy Ghost no heavenly gift to men which He does not pass through her virginal

hands. Such has been the Will of God, who has willed that we should have everything in Mary; so that she who impoverished, humbled, and hid herself even to the abyss of nothingness by her profound humility her whole life long, should now be enriched and exalted by the Most High. Such are the sentiments of the Church and the Holy Fathers.

If I were speaking to the free-thinkers of these times, I would prove what I have said so simply, drawing it out more at length, and confirming it by the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, quoting the original passages, and adducing various solid reasons, which may be seen at length in the book of Fr. Poiré (*La Triple Couronne de la Sainte Vierge*). But as I speak particularly to the poor and simple, who being of good will, and having more faith than the common run of scholars, believe more simply and so more meritoriously, I content myself with putting out the truth quite simply, without stopping to quote the original passages, which they would not understand. Nevertheless, without making much research, I shall not fail from time to time to bring forward some of them. But let us now go on with our subject.

Inasmuch as grace perfects nature, and glory perfects grace, it is certain that our Lord is still, in heaven, as much the Son of Mary as He was on earth; and that, consequently, He has preserved the most perfect obedience and submission of all children towards the best of all mothers. But we must take great pains not to conceive of this dependence as any abasement or imperfection in Jesus Christ. For Mary is infinitely below her Son, who is God, and therefore she does not command Him, as a mother here below would command her child, who is below her. Mary, being altogether transformed into God by grace, and by the glory which transforms all the Saints into Him, asks nothing, wishes nothing, does nothing which is contrary to the Eternal and Immutable Will of God. When we read, then, in the writings of SS. Bernard, Bernardine, Bonaventure, and others, that in heaven and on earth everything, even to God Himself, is subject to the Blessed Virgin, they mean to say that the authority which God has been well pleased to give her is so great that it seems as if she has the same power as God, and that her prayers and petitions are so power-

ful with God, that they always pass for commandments with His Majesty, who never resists the prayer of His dear Mother, because she is always humble and conformed to His Will.

If Moses, by the force of his prayer, arrested the anger of God against the Israelites, in a manner so powerful that the Most High and infinitely merciful Lord, being unable to resist him, told him to let Him alone, that He might be angry with and punish that rebellious people, what must we not with much greater reason think of the prayer of the humble Mary, that worthy Mother of God, which is more powerful with His Majesty than the prayers and intercessions of all the Angels and Saints both in heaven and on earth ?

Mary commands in the heavens the Angels and the Blessed. As a recompense for her profound humility, God has given her the power and permission to fill with Saints the empty thrones from which the apostate angels fell by pride. Such has been the will of the Most High, who exalts the humble, that heaven, earth, and hell bend with good will or bad will to the commandments of the humble Mary, whom He has

made sovereign of heaven and earth, general of His armies, treasurer of His treasures, dispenser of His graces, worker of His greatest marvels, restorer of the human race, mediatrix of men, the exterminator of the enemies of God, and the faithful companion of His grandeurs and His triumphs.

God the Father wishes to have children by Mary till the consummation of the world; and He has said to her these words, *In Jacob inhabitu*—"Dwell in Jacob"—that is to say, Make your dwelling and residence in My predestinated children, figured by Jacob, and not in the reprobate children of the devil, figured by Esau.

Just as, in the natural and corporal generation of children, there is a father and a mother, so in the supernatural and spiritual generation there is a Father, who is God, and a Mother, who is Mary. All the true children of God, the predestinate, have God for their Father, and Mary for their Mother. He who has not Mary for his Mother, has not God for his Father. This is the reason why the reprobate, such as heretics, schismatics, and others, who hate our Blessed Lady, or regard her with con-

tempt and indifference, have not God for their Father, however much they boast of it, simply because they have not Mary for their Mother. For if they had her for their Mother, they would love and honour her as a true and good child naturally loves and honours the mother who has given him life.

The most infallible and indubitable sign by which we may distinguish a heretic, a man of bad doctrine, a reprobate, from one of the predestinate, is that the heretic and the reprobate have nothing but contempt and indifference for our Blessed Lady, endeavouring by their words and examples to diminish the worship and love of her openly or hiddenly, and sometimes under specious pretexts. Alas! God the Father has not told Mary to dwell in them, for they are Esaus.

God the Son wishes to form Himself, and, so to speak, to incarnate Himself, every day by His dear Mother in His members, and He has said to her, *In Israel hereditare*—"Take Israel for your inheritance." It is as if He had said, God the Father has given Me for an inheritance all the nations of the earth, all the men good and bad, pre-

destinate and reprobate. The one I will lead with a rod of gold, and the others with a rod of iron. Of one I will be the Father and the Advocate, the Just Punisher of others, and the Judge of all. But as for you, My dear Mother—you shall have for your heritage and possession only the predestinate, figured by Israel; and, as their good Mother, you shall bring them forth and maintain them; and, as their sovereign, you shall conduct them, govern and defend them.

“This man and that man is born in her,” says the Holy Ghost—*Homo et homo natus est in ea* (Ps. lxxxvi. 5). According to the explanation of some of the Fathers, the first man that is born in Mary is the Man-God, Jesus Christ; the second is a mere man, the child of God and Mary by adoption. If Jesus Christ the Head of men is born in her, the predestinate, who are the members of that Head, ought also to be born in her by a necessary consequence. One and the same mother does not bring forth into the world the head without the members, nor the members without the head; for this would be a monster of nature. So in like manner, in the order of

grace, the Head and the members are born of one and the same Mother ; *and if a member of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ—that is to say, one of the predestinate*—was born of any other mother than Mary, *who has produced the Head*, he would not be one of the predestinate, nor a member of Jesus Christ, but *simply a monster in the order of grace.*

Besides this, Jesus being at present as much as ever the Fruit of Mary—as heaven and earth repeat thousands and thousands of times a day, “and blessed be the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus”—it is certain that Jesus Christ is, for each man in particular who possesses Him, as truly the fruit of the womb of Mary, as He is for the whole world in general ; so that if any one of the faithful has Jesus Christ formed in his heart, he can say boldly, All thanks be to Mary ! what I possess is her effect and her fruit, and without her I should never have had it. We can apply to her more truly than St. Paul applied to himself those words, *Quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis*—“I am in labour again with all the children of God, until Jesus Christ my Son be formed in them in the ful-

ness of His age." St. Augustine, surpassing himself, and going beyond all I have yet said, affirms that all the predestinate, in order to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, are in this world hidden in the womb of the most holy Virgin ; where they are guarded, nourished, brought up, and made to grow by that good Mother until she has brought them forth to glory after death, which is properly the day of their birth, as the Church calls the death of the just. *O mystery of grace, unknown to the reprobate, and but little known even to the predestinate !*

God the Holy Ghost wishes to form Himself in her, and to form elect for Himself by her, and He has said to her, *In electis meis mitte radices*—"Strike the roots, My Well-beloved and My Spouse, of all your virtues in My elect, in order that they may grow from virtue to virtue, and from grace to grace. I took so much complacence in you when you lived on earth in the practice of the most sublime virtues, that I desire still to find you on earth, without your ceasing to be in heaven. For this end, reproduce yourself in My elect, that I may behold in them with complacence the roots

of your invincible faith, of your profound humility, of your universal mortification, of your sublime prayer, of your ardent charity, of your firm hope, and all your virtues. You are always My Spouse, as faithful; as pure, and as fruitful as ever. Let your faith give Me My faithful, your purity My virgins, and your fertility My temples and My elect."

When Mary has struck her roots in a soul, she produces there marvels of grace, which she alone can produce, because she alone is the fruitful Virgin, who never has had, and never will have, her equal in purity and in fruitfulness.

Mary has produced, together with the Holy Ghost, the greatest thing which has been, or ever will be, which is a God-Man ; and she will consequently produce the greatest things that there will be in the latter times.

The formation and education of the great Saints who shall come at the end of the world are reserved for her. For it is only that singular and miraculous Virgin who can produce, in union with the Holy Ghost, singular and extraordinary things.

When the Holy Ghost, her Spouse, has

found Mary in a soul, He flies there. He enters there in His fuiness ; He communicates Himself to that soul abundantly, and to the full extent to which she makes room for her Spouse. *Nay, one of the great reasons why the Holy Ghost does not now do startling wonders in our souls is because He does not find there a sufficiently great union with His faithful and indissoluble Spouse.* I say indissoluble Spouse, because since that Substantial Love of the Father and the Son has espoused Mary, in order to produce Jesus Christ, the Head of the elect and Jesus Christ in the elect, He has never repudiated her, inasmuch as she has always been fruitful and faithful. We may evidently conclude, then, from what I have said : (1) that Mary has received from God a great domination over the souls of the elect ; for she cannot make her residence in them, as God the Father ordered her to do, and form them in Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ in them, and strike the roots of her virtues in their hearts and be the indissoluble companion of the Holy Ghost in all His works of grace—she cannot, I say, do all these things unless she has a right and domination over their souls by a singular

grace of the Most High, who, having given her power over His only and Natural Son, has given it also to her over His adopted children, not only as to their bodies, which would be but little matter, but also as to their souls.

Mary is the Queen of heaven and earth by grace, as Jesus is the King of them by nature and by conquest. Now, as the kingdom of Jesus Christ consists principally in the heart and interior of a man—according to that word, “The kingdom of God is within you”—in like manner the kingdom of our Blessed Lady is principally in the interior of a man—that is to say, his soul; and it is principally in souls that she is more glorified with her Son than in all visible creatures, and that we can call her as the Saints do, the Queen of all hearts.

(2) We must conclude that the most holy Virgin being necessary to God by a necessity which we call hypothetical, in consequence of His Will, she is far more necessary to men, in order for them to arrive at their Last End. We must not confound devotions to our Blessed Lady with devotions to the other Saints, as if devotion to her was not far more necessary than devo-

tion to them, or as if devotion to her were a matter of supererogation.

The learned and pious Suarez the Jesuit, the erudite and devout Justus Lipsius, doctor of Louvain, and many others have proved invincibly, in consequence of the sentiments of the Fathers (and among others, of St. Augustine, St. Ephrem, deacon of Edessa, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Germanus of Constantinople, St. John Damascene, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure), that devotion to our Blessed Lady is necessary to salvation, and that, even in the opinion of *Cæcolampadius* and some other heretics, it is an infallible mark of reprobation to have no esteem and love for the holy Virgin; while, on the other hand, it is an infallible mark of predestination to be entirely and truly devoted to her.

The figures and words of the Old and New Testaments prove this. The sentiments and examples of the Saints confirm it. Reason and experience teach and demonstrate it. Even the devil and his crew, constrained by the force of truth, have often been obliged to avow it in their own despite.

Among all the passages of the holy Fathers and Doctors, of which I have made an ample collection, in order to prove this truth, I shall, for brevity's sake, quote but one : *Tibi devotum esse, est arma quædam salutis quæ Deus his dat, quos vult salvos fieri*— “To be devout to you, O holy Virgin,” says St. John Damascene, “is an arm of salvation which God gives to those whom He wishes to save.” I could bring forward here many histories which prove the same thing, and, among others, one which is related in the chronicles of St. Dominic. There was an unhappy heretic near Carcassonne, where St. Dominic was preaching the Rosary, who was possessed by a legion of fifteen thousand devils. These evil spirits were compelled, to their confusion, by the commandment of our Blessed Lady, to avow many great and consoling truths, touching devotion to the holy Virgin ; and they did this with so much force, and so much clearness, that it is not possible to read this authentic history, and the panegyric which the devil made, in spite of himself, of devotion to the most holy Mary, without shedding tears of joy, however luke-warm we may be in our devotion to her.

If devotion to the most holy Virgin Mary is necessary to all men, simply for working out their salvation, it is still more so for those who are called to any particular perfection ; and I do not think any one can *acquire an intimate union with our Lord,* and a perfect fidelity to the Holy Ghost, without a very great *union with the most holy Virgin,* and a great *dependence on her succour.*

It is Mary alone who has found grace before God, without the aid of any other mere creature : it is only by her that *all those who have found grace before God* have found it at all ; and it is *only by her that all those who shall come afterwards* shall find it. She was full of grace when she was saluted by the Archangel Gabriel, and she was super-abundantly filled with grace by the Holy Ghost when He covered her with His unspeakable Shadow ; and she has so augmented, from day to day and from moment to moment, this double plenitude, that she has reached a point of grace immense and inconceivable ; in such sort that the Most High has made her the sole treasurer of His treasures, and the sole dispenser of His

graces, to ennoble, to exalt, and to enrich whom she wishes; to give the entry to whom she wills into the narrow way of heaven; to pass whom she wills, and in spite of all obstacles, through the strait gate of life; and to give the throne, the sceptre, and the crown of the King to whom she wills. Jesus is everywhere and always the Fruit and the Son of Mary; and Mary is everywhere the veritable tree, who bears the Fruit of life, and the true Mother, who produces it.

It is Mary alone to whom God has given the keys of the cellars of divine love, and the power to enter into the most sublime and secret ways of perfection, and the power likewise to make others enter in there also. It is Mary alone who has given to the miserable children of *J e*, the faithless, the entry into the terrestrial paradise, that they may walk there agreeably with God, hide themselves there securely against their enemies, and feed themselves there deliciously, without any more fear of death, on the fruit of the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil, and drink in long draughts the heavenly waters of that fair fountain, which gushes forth there

with abundance ; or rather she is herself that terrestrial paradise, that virgin and blessed earth, from which Adam and Eve, the sinners, have been driven, and she gives no entry there except to those whom it is her pleasure to make Saints.

All the rich among the people, to make use of an expression of the Holy Ghost, according to the explanation of St. Bernard—all the rich among the people shall supplicate thy face from age to age, and particularly at the end of the world ; that is to say, the greatest Saints, the souls richest in graces and virtues, shall be the most assiduous in praying to our Blessed Lady, and in having her always present as their perfect model to imitate, and their powerful aid to give them succour.

I have said that this would come to pass particularly *at the end of the world*, and indeed, *presently*, because the Most High with His holy Mother has to form for Himself great Saints, who shall surpass most of the other Saints in sanctity, as much as the cedars of Lebanon outgrow the little shrubs, as has been revealed to a holy soul, whose life has been written by a great servant of God.

These great souls, full of grace and zeal, shall be chosen to match themselves against the enemies of God, who shall rage on all sides ; and they shall be singularly devout to our Blessed Lady, illuminated by her light, nourished by her milk, led by her spirit, supported by her arm, and sheltered under her protection, so that they shall fight with one hand and build with the other. With one hand they shall fight, overthrow, and crush the heretics with their heresies, the schismatics with their schisms, the idolaters with their idolatries, and the sinners with their impieties. With the other hand they shall build the temple of the true Solomon, and the mystical city of God ; that is to say, the most holy Virgin, called by the holy Fathers the temple of Solomon and the city of God. By their words and their examples they shall bend the whole world to true devotion to Mary. This shall bring upon them many enemies ; but it shall also bring many victories and much glory for God alone. It is this which God revealed to St. Vincent Ferrer, the great apostle of his age, as he has sufficiently noted in one of his works.

It is this which the Holy Ghost seems to

have prophesied in the fifty-eighth Psalm, of which these are the words: *Et scient quia Dominus dominabitur Jacob, et finium terræ; convertentur ad vesperam, et famem patientur ut canes, et circuitunt civitatem—*

“And they shall know that God will rule Jacob, and all the ends of the earth; they shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs, and shall go round about the city.”

This city which men shall find at the end of the world to convert themselves in, and to satisfy the hunger they have for justice, is the most holy Virgin, who is called by the Holy Ghost the City of God.

It is by Mary that the salvation of the world has begun, and it is by Mary that it must be consummated. Mary has hardly appeared at all in the first coming of Jesus Christ, in order that men, as yet but little instructed and enlightened on the Person of her Son, should not remove themselves from Him, in attaching themselves too strongly and too grossly to her. This would have apparently taken place, if she had been known, because of the admirable charms which the Most High had bestowed even upon her exterior. This is so true

that St. Denys the Areopagite has informed us in his writings that when he saw our Blessed Lady, he should have taken her for a Divinity, in consequence of her secret charms and incomparable beauty, had not the Faith in which he was well established taught him the contrary. But in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary has to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that by her Jesus Christ may be known, loved, and served. The reasons which moved the Holy Ghost to hide His Spouse during her life, and to reveal her but a very little since the preaching of the Gospel, subsist no longer.

God, then, wishes to reveal and discover Mary, the masterpiece of His hands, in these latter times :

1. Because she hid herself in this world, and put herself lower than the dust by her profound humility, having obtained of God and of His Apostles and Evangelists that she should not be made manifest.

2. Because, being the Masterpiece of the hands of God, as well here below by grace as in heaven by glory, He wishes to be glorified and praised in her by those who are living upon the earth.

3. As she is the aurora which precedes and discovers the Sun of Justice, who is Jesus Christ, she ought to be recognised and perceived, in order that Jesus Christ may be so.

4. Being the way by which Jesus Christ came to us the first time, she will also be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner.

5. Being the sure means and the straight and immaculate way to go to Jesus Christ, and to find Him perfectly, it is by her that the holy souls, who are to shine forth especially in sanctity, have to find our Lord. He who shall find Mary shall find life; that is, Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But no one can find Mary who does not seek her; and no one can seek her who does not know her: for we cannot seek or desire an unknown object. It is necessary, then, for the greater knowledge and glory of the Most Holy Trinity, that Mary should be more known than ever.

6. Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might, and in grace, in these latter times: in mercy, to bring back and lovingly receive the poor strayed sinners

who shall be converted and shall return to the Catholic Church ; in might, against the enemies of God, idolaters, schismatics, Mahometans, Jews, and souls hardened in impiety, who shall rise in terrible revolt against God to seduce all those who shall be contrary to them, and to make them fall by promises and threats ; and, finally, she must shine forth in grace, in order to animate and sustain the valiant soldiers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who shall do battle for His interests.

7. And, lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his crew, as an army ranged in battle, principally in these latter times, because the devil, knowing that he has but little time, and now less than ever, to destroy souls, will every day redouble his efforts and his combats. He will presently raise up new persecutions, and will put terrible snares before the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom it gives him more trouble to surmount than it does to conquer others.

It is principally of these last and cruel persecutions of the devil, which shall go on increasing daily till the reign of Antichrist, that we ought to understand that first and

celebrated prediction and curse of God, pronounced in the terrestrial Paradise against the serpent. It is to our purpose to explain this here, for the glory of the most holy Virgin, for the salvation of her children, and for the confusion of the devil.

Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus (Gen. iii. 15)—“I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.”

God has never made or formed but one enmity; but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and develop even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil—between the children and the servants of the Blessed Virgin and the children and instruments of Lucifer. The most terrible of all the enemies which God has set up against the devil is His holy Mother Mary. He has inspired her, even since the days of the earthly Paradise, though she existed then only in His idea, with so much hatred against that cursed enemy of God, with so much industry in unveiling the malice of that old serpent.

with so much power to conquer, to overthrow, and to crush that proud impious rebel, that he fears her not only more than all Angels and men, but in some sense more than God Himself. It is not that the anger, the hatred, and the power of God are not infinitely greater than those of the Blessed Virgin, for the perfections of Mary are limited, but it is, first, because Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from being beaten and punished by a little and humble handmaid of God, and her humility humbles him more than the Divine power ; and, secondly, because God has given Mary such a great power against the devils, that, as they have often been obliged to confess, in spite of themselves, by the mouths of the possessed, they fear one of her sighs for a soul more than the prayers of all the Saints, and one of her menaces against them more than all other torments.

What Lucifer has lost by pride, Mary has gained by humility. What Eve has damned and lost by disobedience, Mary has saved by obedience. Eve, in obeying the serpent, has destroyed all her children together with herself, and has delivered them to him ; Mary, being perfectly faithful to God, has

saved all her children and servants together with herself, and has consecrated them to His Majesty.

God has not only set an enmity but *enmities*, not simply between Mary and the devil, but between the race of the holy Virgin and the race of the devil ; that is to say, God has set enmities, antipathies, and secret hatreds between the true children and the servants of Mary and the children and servants of the devil. They do not love each other mutually. They have no inward correspondence with each other. The children of Belial, the slaves of Satan, the friends of the world (for it is the same thing), have always up to this time persecuted those who belong to our Blessed Lady, and will in future persecute them more than ever ; just as of old Cain persecuted his brother Abel, and Esau his brother Jacob, who are the figures of the reprobate and the predestinate. But the humble Mary will always have the victory over that proud spirit, and so great a victory that she will go the length of crushing his head, where his pride dwells. She will always discover the malice of the serpent. She will always counterwork his infernal

mines and dissipate his diabolical counsels, and will guarantee even to the end of time her faithful servants from his cruel claw. But the power of Mary over all the devils will especially break out in the latter times, when Satan will lay his snares against her heel ; that is to say, her humble slaves and her poor children, whom she will raise up to make war against him. They shall be little and poor in the world's esteem, and abased before all, like the heel, trodden underfoot and persecuted as the heel is by the other members of the body. But in return for this, they shall be rich in the grace of God, which Mary shall distribute to them abundantly. They shall be great and exalted before God in sanctity, superior to all other creatures by their animated zeal, and leaning so strongly on the divine succour, that, with the humility of their heel, in union with Mary, they shall crush the head of the devil, and cause Jesus Christ to triumph.

In a word, God wishes that His holy Mother should be at present more known, more loved, more honoured, than she has ever been. This, no doubt, will take place,

if the predestinate enter, with the grace and light of the Holy Ghost, into the interior and perfect practice which I will disclose to them shortly. Then they will see clearly, as far as faith allows, that beautiful Star of the Sea. They will arrive happily in harbour, following its guidance, in spite of the tempests and the pirates. They will know the grandeurs of that Queen, and will consecrate themselves entirely to her service, as subjects and slaves of love. They will experience her sweetnesses and her maternal goodnesses, and they will love her tenderly like well-beloved children. They will know the mercies of which she is full, and the need they have of her succour; and they will have recourse to her in all things, as to their dear advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ. They will know what is the most sure, the most easy, the most short, and the most perfect means by which to go to Jesus Christ; and they will deliver themselves to Mary, body and soul, without reserve, that they may thus be all for Jesus Christ.

But who shall be those servants, slaves, and children of Mary? They shall be a burning fire of the ministers of the Lord,

who shall kindle the fire of divine love everywhere, and *stout sagittæ in manu potentis* —“like sharp arrows in the hand of the powerful” Mary to pierce her enemies. They shall be the sons of Levi, well purified by the fire of great tribulation, and closely adhering to God; who shall carry the gold of love in their heart, the incense of prayer in their spirit, and the myrrh of mortification in their body; and they shall be everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ to the poor and to the little, while they shall be an odour of death to the great, to the rich, and to the proud worldlings.

They shall be clouds thundering and flying through the air at the least breath of the Holy Ghost; who, without attaching themselves to anything, without being astonished at anything, without putting themselves in pain about anything shall shower forth the rain of the Word of God and of life eternal. They shall thunder against sin; they shall storm against the world; they shall strike the devil and his crew; and they shall strike further and further, for life or for death, with their two-edged sword of the Word of God, all those to whom they shall be sent on the part of the Most High.

They shall be the true apostles of the latter times, to whom the Lord of Hosts shall give the word and the might to work marvels, and to carry off the glory of the spoils of His enemies. They shall sleep without gold or silver, and, what is more, without care, in the middle of the other priests, ecclesiastics, and clerks, *inter medios clericos* ; and yet they shall have the silvered wings of the dove, to go, with the pure intention of the glory of God and the salvation of souls, wheresoever the Holy Ghost shall call them. Neither shall they leave behind them, in the places where they have preached, anything but the gold of charity, which is the accomplishment of the whole law. In a word, we know that they shall be true disciples of Jesus Christ, who, marching in the footsteps of His poverty, humility, contempt of the world, and charity, shall teach the strait way of God in the pure truth, according to the holy Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the world, without putting themselves in pain about things, or accepting persons, without sparing, fearing, or listening to any mortal, however influential he may be.

They shall have in their mouths the two-

edged sword of the Word of God. They shall carry on their shoulders the bloody standard of the cross, the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, the sacred names of Jesus and Mary in their hearts, and the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ in their own behaviour. These are the great men who shall come. But Mary shall be there by the order of the Most High, to extend His empire over that of the impious, the idolaters, and the Mahometans. But when and how shall this be? God alone knows. It is for us to hold our tongues, to pray, to sigh, and to wait: *expectans expectari*—"expecting, I have expected."

II.—DISCERNMENT OF THE TRUE DEVOTION TO
OUR BLESSED LADY.

HAVING said something so far of the necessity which we have of the devotion to the most holy Virgin, I must now show in what this devotion consists. This I will do, by God's help, after I shall have first presupposed some fundamental truths which shall throw light on that grand and solid devotion which I desire to disclose.

First Truth. Jesus Christ our Saviour,

true God and true Man, ought to be the last end of all our other devotions, else they are false and delusive. Jesus Christ is the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end, of all things. We labour not, as the Apostle says, except to render every man perfect in Jesus Christ ; because it is in Him alone that the whole plenitude of the Divinity dwells, together with all the other plenitudes of graces, virtues, and perfections ; because it is in Him alone that we have been blessed with all spiritual benediction ; and because He is our only Master, who has to teach us ; our only Lord, on whom we ought to depend ; our only Head, to whom we must belong ; our only Model, to whom we should conform ourselves ; our only Physician, who can heal us ; our only Shepherd, who can feed us ; our only Way, who can lead us ; our only Truth, who can make us grow ; our only Life, who can animate us ; and our only All in all things, who can suffice us. There has been no other name given under heaven, except the name of Jesus, by which we can be saved. God has laid no other foundation of our salvation, of our perfection, and of our glory, except Jesus Christ. Every building

which is not built upon that firm rock is founded upon the moving sand, and sooner or later will fall infallibly. Every one of the faithful who is not united to Him, as a branch to the stock of the vine, shall fall, shall wither, and shall be fit only to be cast into the fire. If we are in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ in us, we have no condemnation to fear. Neither the Angels of heaven, nor the men of earth, nor the devils of hell, nor any other creatures, can injure us; because they cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. By Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ, we can do all things; we can render all honour and glory to the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost; we can become perfect ourselves, and be to our neighbour a good odour of eternal life.

If, then, we establish the solid devotion to our Blessed Lady, it is only to establish more perfectly the devotion to Jesus Christ, and to put forward an easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. If devotion to our Lady removed us from Jesus Christ, we should have to reject it as an illusion of the devil; but on the contrary, so far from this being the case, there is nothing

which makes devotion to our Lady more necessary for us, as I have already shown, and will show still further hereafter, than that it is the means of finding Jesus Christ perfectly, of loving Him tenderly, and of serving Him faithfully.

I here turn for one moment to Thee, O my sweet Jesus, to complain lovingly to Thy Divine Majesty that the greater part of Christians, *even the most learned, do not know the necessary union which there is between Thee and Thy holy Mother.* Thou, Lord, art always with Mary, and Mary is always with Thee, and she cannot be without Thee, else she would cease to be what she is. She is so transformed into Thee by grace that she lives no more, that she is as though she were not, It is Thou only, my Jesus, who livest and reignest in her more perfectly than in all the Angels and the Blessed. Ah! if we knew the glory and the love which Thou receivest in this admirable creature, *we should have very different thoughts both of Thee and of her from what we have now.* She is so intimately united with Thee, that it were easier to separate the light from the sun, the heat from the fire. I say more : it were easier to separate from

Thee all the Angels and the Saints than the divine Mary, because she loves Thee more ardently, and glorifies Thee more perfectly than all other creatures put together.

After that, my sweet Master, is it not an astonishingly pitiable thing to see the ignorance and the darkness of all men here below in regard to Thy holy Mother? I speak not so much of idolaters and pagans, who, knowing Thee not, care not to know Thee; I speak, not even of heretics and schismatics, who care not to be devout to Thy holy Mother, being separated as they are from Thee and Thy holy Church: *but I speak of Catholic Christians, and even of doctors amongst Catholics, who make profession of teaching truths to others, and yet know not Thee nor Thy holy Mother, except in a speculative, dry, barren, and indifferent manner.* These doctors speak but rarely of Thy holy Mother, and of the devotion which we ought to have to her, because they fear, so they say, lest we should abuse it, and should do some injury to Thee in too much honouring Thy holy Mother. If they see or hear any one devout to our Blessed Lady, speaking often of his devotion to that good

Mother in a tender, strong, and persuasive way, as of a secure means without delusion, as of a short road without danger, as of an immaculate way without imperfection, and as of a wonderful secret for finding and loving Thee perfectly, they cry out against him, and give him a thousand false reasons by way of proving to him that he ought not to talk so much of our Blessed Lady, that there are great abuses in that devotion, and that we must direct our energies to destroy these abuses, and to speak of Thee, rather than to incline the people to devotion to our Blessed Lady, whom they already love sufficiently.

We hear them sometimes speak of devotion to Thy holy Mother, not for the purpose of establishing it and persuading men to it, but to destroy the abuses which are made of it, *while all the time these teachers are without piety or tender devotion towards Thyself, simply because they have none for Mary.* They regard the Rosary, the Scapular, and the Chaplet as devotions proper for weak and ignorant minds, and without which men can save themselves; and if there falls into their hands any poor client of our Lady who says his Rosary, or has

any other practice of devotion towards her, they soon change his spirit and his heart. Instead of the Rosary, they counsel him the seven Penitential Psalms. Instead of devotion to the holy Virgin, they counsel him devotion to Jesus Christ.

O my sweet Jesus, have these people got Thy spirit ? Do they please Thee in acting thus ? Is it to please Thee, to spare one single effort to please Thy Mother for fear of thereby displeasing Thee ? Does devotion to Thy holy Mother hinder devotion to Thyself ? Is it that she attributes to herself the honour which we pay her ? Is it that she makes a side for herself apart ? Is it that she is an alien, who has no union with Thee ? Does it displease Thee that we should try to please her ? Is it to separate or to alienate ourselves from Thy love to give ourselves to her and to love her ? Yet, my sweet Master, the greater part of the learned could not shrink more from devotion to Thy holy Mother, and could not show more indifference to it, if all that I have just said were true ! Keep me, Lord —keep me from their sentiments and their practices, and give me some share in the sentiments of gratitude, esteem, respect,

and love which Thou hadst in regard to Thy holy Mother, in order that I may love Thee and glorify Thee all the more by imitating and following Thee more closely.

So, as if up to this point I had still said nothing in honour of Thy holy Mother, "give me now the grace to praise her worthily"—*fac me digne tuam, Matrem collaudare*—in spite of all her enemies, who are Thine as well; and grant me to say loudly with the Saints, *Non præsumat aliquis Deum se habere propitium, qui benedictam Matrem offensam habuerit*—"Let not that man presume to look for the mercy of God who offends His holy Mother." To obtain of Thy mercy a true devotion to Thy holy Mother, and to inspire it to the whole earth, make me to love Thee ardently; and for that end receive the burning prayer which I make to Thee with St. Augustine and Thy true friends:

"Tu es Christus, pater meus sanctus, Deus meus pius, rex meus magnus, pastor meus bonus, magister meus unus, adjutor meus optimus, dilectus meus pulcherrimus, panis meus vivus, sacerdos meus in æternum, dux meus ad patriam, lux mea vera, dulcedo mea sancta, via mea recta, sapien-

tia mea præclara, simplicitas mea pura.
concordia mea pacifica, custodia mea tota,
portio mea bona, salus mea sempiterna.

“Christe Jesu, amabilis Domine, cur amavi, quare concupivi in omni vitâ meâ quidquam præter te Jesum Deum meum? Ubi eram quando tecum mente non eram? Jam ex hoc Lunc, omnia desideria mea, incalescite et effluite in Dominum Jesum; currite, satis hactenus tardâstis; properate, quo pergitis; quærite quam quæritis. Jesu, qui non amat te, anathema sit; qui te non amat, amaritudinibus repleatur.

“O dulcis Jesu, te amet, in te delectetur. te admiretur omnis sensus bonus tuæ conveniens laudi; Deus cordis mei et pars mea, Christe Jesu, deficiat cor meum spiritu suo, et vivas tu in me, et concalescat spiritu meo vivus carbo amoris tui, et excrescat in ignem perfectum, ardeat jugiter in arâ cordis mei, ferveat in medullis meis. flagret in absconditis animæ meæ; in die consummationis meæ consummatus inveniar apud te. Amen.”

I have desired to put in Latin this admirable prayer of St. Augustine. in order that those who understand Latin may say it

every day, to ask for the love of Jesus, which we seek by the divine Mary.

(The translator thinks it well to give the prayer in English, and without throwing it into the small print of a note:)

Thou art Christ, my holy Father, my tender God, my Great King, my good Shepherd, my one Master, my best Helper, my most Beautiful and my Beloved, my living Bread, my Priest for ever, my Leader to my country, my true Light, my holy Sweetness, my straight Way, my excellent Wisdom, my pure Simplicity, my pacific Harmony, my whole Guard, my good Portion, my everlasting Salvation.

Christ Jesus, sweet Lord, why have I ever loved, why in my whole life have I ever desired, anything except Thee, Jesus my God? Where was I, when I was not in Thy mind with Thee? Now, from this time forth, do ye, all my desires, grow hot, and flow out upon the Lord Jesus: run—ye have been tardy so far; hasten whither ye are going; seek whom ye are seeking. O Jesus, may he who loves Thee not be anathema; may he who loves Thee not be filled with bitterness!

O sweet Jesus, may every good feeling

that is fitted for Thy praise love Thee, delight in Thee, admire Thee, God of my heart, and my Portion! Christ Jesus, may my heart faint away in spirit, and mayest Thou be my life within me! May the live coal of Thy love grow hot within my spirit, and break forth into a perfect fire: may it burn incessantly on the altar of my heart; may it glow in my innermost being; may it blaze in hidden recesses of my soul: and in the day of my consummation may I be found consummated with Thee! Amen.

Second Truth. We must conclude, from what Jesus Christ is with regard to us, that we do not belong to ourselves, but, as the Apostle says, are entirely His, as His members and His slaves, whom He has bought at an infinitely dear price—the price of all His Blood. Before Baptism we belonged to the devil, as his slaves; but Baptism has made us true slaves of Jesus Christ, who have no right to live, to work, or to die, except to bring forth fruit for that God-Man, to glorify Him in our bodies, and to let him reign in our souls, because we are His conquest, His acquired people, and His inheritance. It is for the same reason that the Holy Ghost compares us: 1. to

trees planted along the waters of grace in the field of the Church, who ought to bring forth their fruit in their seasons ; 2. to the branches of a vine, of which Jesus Christ is the stock, and which must yield good grapes ; 3. to a flock, of which Jesus Christ is the shepherd, and which is to multiply and give milk ; 4. to a good land, of which God is the labourer, in which the seed multiplies itself, and brings forth thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold. Jesus Christ cursed the unfruitful fig-tree, and gave sentence against the useless servant, who had not made any profit on his talent. All this proves to us that Jesus Christ wishes to receive some fruits from our wretched selves, namely, our good works, because those good works belong to Him alone : *Creati in operibus bonis in Christo Jesu*—“Created in good works in Christ Jesus”—which words show both that Jesus Christ is the sole principle, and ought to be the sole end, of all our good works, and also that we ought to serve Him, not as servants on wages, but as slaves of love. I will explain myself :

Here on earth there are two ways of belonging to another, and of depending on

His authority, namely, simple service and slavery—what we mean by a servant, and what we mean by a slave.

By common service amongst Christians a man engages himself to serve another during a certain time, at a certain rate of wages or of recompense.

By slavery a man is entirely dependent on another for his whole life, and must serve his master without pretending to any wages or reward, just as one of his beasts, over which he has the right of life and death.

There are three sorts of slavery : a slavery of nature, a slavery of constraint, and a slavery of the will. All creatures are slaves of God in the first sense : *Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus*—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness of it." The demons and the damned are slaves in the second sense : the just and the Saints in the third. The slavery of the will is the most glorious to God, who looks at the heart, claims the heart, and calls Himself the God of the heart ; that is, of the loving will. God and His service above all things, even when nature does not oblige us to it.

There is an entire difference between a servant and a slave : 1. A servant does not give all he is, all he has, and all he can acquire by himself or by another, to his master ; but the slave gives himself whole and entire to his master, all he has and all he can gain, without any exception. 2. The servant exacts wages for the services which he performs for his master ; but the slave can exact nothing, whatever assiduity, whatever industry, whatever energy, he may have at his work. 3. The servant can leave his master when he pleases, or, at least, when the time of his service shall be expired ; but the slave has no right to quit his master at his will. 4. The master of the servant has no right of life and death over him, so that if he kill him like one of the beasts of burden, he would commit an unjust homicide ; but the master of the slave has by the law a right of life and death over him, so that he may sell him to anybody he likes, or kill him as if he stood on the same level as one of his horses. 5. Lastly, the servant is only for a time in his master's service ; the slave is for always.

There is nothing among men which makes

us belong to another more than slavery. There is nothing among Christians which makes us more absolutely belong to Jesus Christ and His holy Mother than the slavery of the will, according to the example of Jesus Christ Himself, who took on Him the form of a slave for love of us—*formam servi accipiens*--and also according to the example of the holy Virgin, who is called the servant and the slave of the Lord. The Apostle calls himself, as by a title of honour, *Servus Christi*—"The slave of Christ." Christians are often called in the Holy Scriptures *Servi Christi*—"Slaves of Christ"—which word *servus*, as a great man has truly remarked, signified in old times nothing but a slave, because there were no servants then like those of the present day. Masters were served only either by slaves or by freedmen. It is this which the catechism of the Holy Council of Trent, in order to leave no doubt about our being slaves of Jesus Christ, expresses by an unequivocal term, in calling us *Mancipia Christi*—"Slaves of Jesus Christ."

Having premised this, I say that we ought to be to Jesus Christ and to serve Him not only as mercenary servants, but

as loving slaves, who, by an effect of great love, give themselves up to serve Him in the quality of slaves, for the simple honour of belonging to Him. Before Baptism we were the slaves of the devil ! Baptism has made us the slaves of Jesus Christ : Christians must needs be either the slaves of the devil or the slaves of Jesus Christ.

What I say absolutely of Jesus Christ, I say relatively of our Blessed Lady. Jesus Christ, having chosen her for the inseparable companion of His life, of His death, of His glory, and of His power in heaven and upon earth, has given her by grace, relatively to His Majesty, all the same rights and privileges which He possesses by nature. *Quidquid Deo convenit per naturam, Mariæ convenit per gratiam*—"All that is fitting to God by nature is fitting to Mary by grace"—say the Saints ; so that, according to them, Mary and Jesus having but the same will and the same power, the two have the same subjects, servants, and slaves.

We may, therefore, following the sentiments of the Saints and of many great men, call ourselves, and make ourselves, the loving slaves of the most holy Virgin, in order to be by that very means the more

perfectly the slaves of Jesus Christ. Our Blessed Lady is the means our Lord made use of to come to us. She is also the means which we must make use of to go to Him. For she is not like all the rest of creatures, who, if we should attach ourselves to them, might rather draw us away from God than draw us near Him. The strongest inclination of Mary is to unite us to Jesus Christ her Son : *and the strongest inclination of the Son is that we should come to Him by His holy Mother.* It is to honour and please Him, just as it would be to do honour and pleasure to a king, to become more perfectly his subject and his slave, by making ourselves the slaves of the Queen. It is on this account that the holy Fathers and St. Bonaventure after them said that our Lady was the way to go to our Lord : *Via veniendi ad Christum est appropinquare ad illam*—"The way of coming to Christ is to draw near to her."

Moreover, if, as I have said, the holy Virgin is the Queen and Sovereign of heaven and of earth, then is it not true what has been said by St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, and St. Bonaventure — has she not as many subjects and slaves as

there are creatures ? *Imperio Dei omnia sub-
ficiuntur, et Virgo ; ecce imperio Virginis
omnia subficiuntur, et Deus*—" All things, the
Virgin included, are subject to the empire
of God ; behold all things, and God in-
cluded, are subject to the empire of the
Virgin." Is it not reasonable that amongst
so many slaves of constraint there should
be some of love, who of their own good-will
in the quality of slaves, should choose Mary
for their mistress ? What ! are men and
devils to have their voluntary slaves and
Mary to have none ? What ! shall a king
hold it to be for his honour that the queen,
his companion, should have slaves over
whom she has the right of life and death,
because the honour and power of the one is
the honour and power of the other, and yet
are we to think that our Lord, who, as the
best of all sons, has divided His entire
power with His holy Mother shall take it
ill that she too has her slaves ? Has He
less respect and love for His Mother than
Ahasuerus had for Esther, or than Solomon
for Bathsebee ? Who shall dare to say so,
or even to think it ?

But whither is my pen hurrying me ?
Why am I stopping here to prove thing

so plain ? If we do not wish to call ourselves slaves of the Blessed Virgin, what matter ? Let us make ourselves and call ourselves slaves of Jesus Christ ; for that is to be the slave of the holy Virgin, inasmuch as Jesus is the fruit and the glory of Mary ; and it is this very thing which we do, by the devotion of which we are hereafter to speak.

Third Truth. Our best actions are ordinarily stained and corrupted by the ground of evil, which is so deeply laid up in us. When we put clean and clear water into a vessel, which has a foul and evil smell, or wine into a cask the inside of which has been spoilt by another wine which has been in it, the clear water and the good wine are spoilt, and readily take the bad odour. In like manner, when God puts into the vessel of our soul, spoilt by original and actual sin, His graces and heavenly dews, or the delicious wine of His love, His gifts are ordinarily spoilt and corrupted by the bad leaven and the evil which sin has left within us. Our actions, even the most sublime and virtuous, feel the effects of it. It is therefore of great importance in the acquiring of perfection, which it must be

remembered is only acquired by union with Jesus Christ to empty ourselves of everything which is bad within us ; otherwise our Lord, who is infinitely pure and hates infinitely the least stain upon our souls, will cast us out from His presence, and will not unite Himself to us.

1. To empty ourselves of ourselves, we must first thoroughly recognise, by the light of the Holy Ghost, our inward corruption, our incapacity for every good thing useful for salvation, our weakness in all things, our inconstancy at all times, our indignity of every grace, and our iniquity in every position. The sin of our first father has spoilt us all, soured us, puffed us up and corrupted us, as the leaven sours, puffs, and corrupts the paste into which it is put. The actual sins which we have committed, whether mortal or venial, pardoned though they may be, have nevertheless increased our concupiscence, our weakness, our inconstancy, and our corruption, and have left evil consequences in our souls. Our bodies are so corrupted that they are called by the Holy Ghost bodies of sin, conceived in sin, nourished in sin, and capable of all sin—bodies subject to thou-

sands of maladies, which go on corrupting from day to day, and which engender nothing but disease, vermin, and corruption.

Our soul, united to our body, has become so carnal that it is called flesh. "All flesh having corrupted its way," we have nothing for our portion but pride and blindness in the spirit, hardness in the heart, weakness and inconstancy in the soul, concupiscence, revolted passions, and sicknesses in the body. We are naturally prouder than peacocks, more grovelling on the earth than toads, more vile than unclean animals, more envious than serpents, more gluttonous than hogs, more furious than tigers, lazler than tortoises, weaker than reeds, and more capricious than weathercocks. We have down in our own selves nothing but nothingness and sin, and we deserve nothing but the anger of God and the everlasting hell.

After this, ought we to be astonished if our Lord has said that whosoever wishes to follow Him must renounce himself and hate his own soul, and that whosoever shall love his own soul, shall lose it, and whosoever shall hate it shall save it? He who is

Infinite Wisdom does not give commandments without reason, and He has only commanded us to hate ourselves, because we so richly deserve to be hated. Nothing is worthier of love than God, and nothing is worthier of hatred than ourselves.

2. Secondly, in order to empty ourselves of ourselves, we must die to ourselves daily. That is to say, we must renounce the operations of the powers of our soul, and of the senses of our body. We must see as if we saw not, understand as if we understood not, and make use of the things of this world as if we made no use of them at all. This is what St. Paul calls dying daily—*Quotidie morior*. "If the grain of corn falling on the earth does not die it remains earth, and brings forth no good fruit"—*Nisi granum frumenti, cadens in terram, mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet*. If we die not to ourselves, and if our hollest devotions do not incline us to this necessary and useful death, we shall bring forth no fruit worth anything, and our devotions will become useless. All our justices will be stained by self-love and our own will; and this will cause God to hold in abomination the greatest sacrifices we can make, and the

best actions we can do ; so that at our death we shall find our hands empty of virtues and of merits, and we shall not have one spark of pure love, which is only communicated to souls dead to themselves, souls whose life is hidden with Jesus Christ in God.

3. We must choose, therefore, among all the devotions to the Blessed Virgin, the one which draws us most towards this death to ourselves, inasmuch as it will be the best and the most sanctifying. For we must not think that all that shines is gold, that all that tastes sweet is honey, or all that is easy to do and is done by the greatest number is sanctifying. As there are secrets of nature to do in a short time at little cost and with facility, natural operations, so also in like manner there are secrets in the order of grace to do in a short time with sweetness and facility, supernatural operations, such as emptying ourselves of self, filling ourselves with God, and becoming perfect.

The practice which I am about to disclose is one of these secrets of grace, unknown by the greater number of Christians, known even to few of the devout,

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and practised and relished by a far less numberstill. But in order to begin to disclose this practice, let us consider a fourth truth, which is a consequence of the third.

Fourth Truth. It is more perfect, because it is more humble, not to approach God of ourselves without taking a mediator. The very foundation of our nature, as I have just shown, is so corrupted that if we lean on our own works, industries, and preparations, in order to reach God and to please Him, it is certain that our justices will be defied, or be of little weight before God to engage Him to unite Himself to us and to hear us. It is not without reason that God has given us mediators with His Majesty. He has seen our unworthiness and incapacity. He has had pity upon us ; and in order to give us access to His mercies, He has provided us with powerful intercessors with His grandeur, insomuch that to neglect these mediators, and to draw near to His holiness directly, and without any recommendation, is to fail in humility. It is to fail in respect towards God, so high and so holy. It is to make less account of that King of kings than we should make of a king or prince of earth, whom

we should not willingly approach without some friend to speak for us.

Our Lord is our Advocate and Mediator of redemption with God the Father. It is by Him that we ought to pray, in union with the whole Church triumphant and militant. It is by Him that we have access to the Majesty of the Father, before whom we ought never to appear except leaning on the merits, and, indeed, clothed with the merits, of His Son; just as the young Jacob came before his father Isaac in the skins of the kids to receive his benediction.

But have we not need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself? Is our purity great enough to unite us directly to him, and by ourselves? Is he not God, in all things equal to His Father, and by consequence the Holy of Holies, as worthy of respect as His Father? If, by His infinite charity, He has made Himself our bail and our Mediator with God His Father, in order to appease Him and to pay Him what we owed Him, are we on that account to have less respect and less fear for His Majesty and His Sanctity?

Let us say boldly with St. Bernard, that

we have need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself, and that it is the divine Mary who is the most capable of filling that charitable office. It is by her that Jesus Christ came, and it is by her that we must go to Him. If we fear to go directly to Jesus Christ our God, whether because of His infinite greatness, or because of our villainess, or because of our sins, let us boldly implore the aid and intercession of Mary our Mother. She is good, she is tender, she has nothing in her austere or repulsive nothing too sublime and too brilliant. In seeing her, we see our pure nature. She is not the sun, who, by the vivacity of his rays, blinds us because of our weakness; but she is fair and gentle as the moon, which receives the light of the sun, and tempers it to render it more suitable to our capacity. She is so charitable that she repels none of those who ask her intercession, no matter how great sinners they have been; for, as the Saints say, never has it been heard since the world was the world, that any one has confidently and perseveringly had recourse to our Blessed Lady, and yet has been repelled.

She is so powerful that never have any

of her petitions been refused. She has but to show herself before her Son to pray to Him, and straightway He grants her desires, straightway He receives her prayers. He is always lovingly vanquished by the breasts, the yearnings, and the prayers of His dearest Mother. All this is drawn from St. Bernard and from St. Bonaventure, so that, according to them, we have three steps to mount to go to God : the first, which is the nearest to us, and the most suited to our capacity, is Mary ; the second is Jesus Christ ; and the third is God the Father. To go to Jesus, we must go to Mary ; she is our mediatrix of intercession. To go to God the Father, we must go to Jesus : for He is our Mediator of redemption. Now it is by the devotion which I am about to bring forward, that this order is guarded perfectly.

Fifth Truth. It is very difficult, considering our weakness and frailty, to preserve in ourselves the graces and treasures which we have received from God :

1. Because we have this treasure, which is worth more than heaven and earth put together, in frail vessels (*Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus*—“ We have this

treasure in earthen vessels") in a corruptible body and in a weak and inconstant soul, which a mere nothing disturbs and dejects.

2. Because the devils, who are skillful thieves, wish to surprise us unawares, and to strip us. They watch day and night for the favourable moment. For that end they go round about us incessantly to devour us, and to snatch from us in one moment, by a sin, all that we have gained of graces and of merits for many years. Their malice, their experience, their stratagems, and their number, ought to make us fear immensely this misfortune, especially when we see how many persons, fuller of grace than we are, richer in virtues, better founded in experience, and far higher exalted in sanctity, have been surprised, robbed, and unhappily pillaged. Ah ! how many of the cedars of Lebanon, how many of the stars of the firmament, have we not seen to fall miserably, and in the twinkling of an eye to lose all their height and all their brightness ! Whence comes that sad and curious change ? It has not been for want of grace, which is wanting to no man ; but it has been for want of humility. They thought

themselves stronger and more sufficient than they were. They thought themselves capable of guarding their own treasures. They trusted in themselves, leaned upon themselves. They thought their house secure enough, and their coffers strong enough, to keep the precious treasure of their grace. It is because of that scarcely sensible leaning upon themselves, while all the while it seemed to them that they were leaning only on the grace of God, that the most just Lord has permitted them to be robbed by leaving them to themselves. Alas ! if they had but known the admirable devotion which I will unfold presently, they would have confided their treasure to a Virgin, powerful and faithful, who would have kept it for them as if it had been her own possession ; nay, who would have even taken it as an obligation of justice on herself to preserve it for them.

3. It is difficult to persevere in justice because of the strange corruption of the world. The world is now so corrupt that it seems to be inevitable that religious hearts should be soiled, if not by its mud, at least by its dust. So that it has become a kind of miracle for any one to remain firm in the

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midst of this impetuous torrent without being drawn in by it, in the midst of that stormy sea without being drowned in it or stripped by the pirates and the corsairs, in the midst of that pestilent air without being infected by it. It is the Virgin, alone faithful, in whom the serpent has never had part, who works this miracle for those who serve her in that sweet way which I have shortly to unfold.

Having assumed these Five Truths, we must now take more pains than ever to make a good choice of the true devotion to our Blessed Lady. There are at this time, more than ever, false devotions to our Blessed Lady which it is easy to mistake for true ones. The devil, like a false coiner and a subtle and experienced sharper, has already deceived and destroyed so many souls by a false devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that he makes a daily use of his diabolical experience to plunge many others by this same way into everlasting perdition ; amusing them, lulling them to sleep in sin, under the pretext of some prayers badly said, or of some outward practices which he inspires. As a false coiner does not ordinarily counterfeit anything but

gold and silver, or very rarely the other metals, because they are not worth the trouble, so the evil spirit does not for the most part counterfeit the other devotions, but only those to Jesus and Mary, the devotion to Holy Communion, and to our Blessed Lady, because they are, among other devotions, what gold and silver are amongst metals.

It is, then, very important first of all to know (1) false devotions to our Blessed Lady in order to avoid them; and (2) the true devotion in order to embrace it. In conclusion, among so many practices of true devotion to our Blessed Lady, I will explain more in detail, in the second part of this treatise, which is the most perfect one, the one most agreeable to our Lady, the most glorious to God, and the most sanctifying to ourselves, in order that we may attach ourselves to it.

1. *On False Devotions to our Lady.*

I find seven kinds of false devotees and false devotions to our Lady, namely: (1) the critical devotees; (2) the scrupulous devotees; (3) the external devotees; (4) the presumptuous devotees; (5) the incon-

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stant devotees ; (6) the hypocritical devotees ; and (7) the interested devotees.

The *critical* devotees are, for the most part, proud scholars, rash and self-sufficient spirits, who have at bottom some devotion to the holy Virgin, but who criticise nearly all the practices of devotion to her, which the simple people pay simply and holily to their good Mother, because these practices do not fall in with their own humour and fancy. They call in doubt all the miracles and histories recorded by authors worthy of our faith, or drawn from the chronicles of religious orders : narratives which testify to us the mercies and the power of the most holy Virgin. They cannot see without uneasiness simple and humble people on their knees before an altar or an image of our Lady, sometimes in the corner of a street, in order to pray to God there ; and they even accuse them of idolatry, as if they adored the wood or the stone. They say that, for their part, they are not fond of these external devotions, and that their minds are not so weak as to give faith to such a number of tales and little histories as are in circulation about our Lady. Or, at other times, they reply

that the narrators have spoken as professional orators, with exaggeration; or they put a bad interpretation upon their words. These kinds of false devotees and of proud and worldly people are greatly to be feared. They do an infinite wrong to the devotion to our Lady; and they are but too successful in alienating people from it, under the pretext of destroying its abuses.

The *scrupulous* devotees are those who fear to dishonour the Son by honouring the Mother, to abase the one in elevating the other. They cannot bear that we should attribute to our Lady the most just praise which the holy Fathers have given her. It is all they can do to endure that there should be more people before the altar of the Blessed Virgin than before the Blessed Sacrament, as if the one was contrary to the other, as if those who prayed to our Blessed Lady did not pray to Jesus Christ by her. They are unwilling that we should speak so often of our Lady, and address ourselves so frequently to her. These are the favourite sentences constantly in their mouths: "To what end are so many chaplets, so many confraternities, and so many external devotions to the Blessed

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Virgin ? There is much of ignorance in all this. It makes a mummery of our religion. Speak to us of those who are devout to Jesus Christ." (Yet they often name Him without uncovering : I say this by way of parenthesis.) "We must have recourse to Jesus Christ ; He is our only Mediator. We must preach Jesus Christ ; this is the solid devotion." What they say is true in a certain sense, but it is very dangerous, when, by the application they make of it, they hinder devotion to our Blessed Lady, and it is, under the pretext of a greater good, a subtle snare of the evil one. For never do we honour Jesus Christ more than when we are most honouring His Blessed Mother. Indeed, we only honour Mary that we may the more perfectly honour Jesus, inasmuch as we only go to her as to the way in which we are to find the end we are seeking, which is Jesus.

The Church, with the Holy Ghost, blesses our Lady first, and our Lord second : *Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus*—"Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." It is not that Mary is more than Jesus, or even equal to Him. That

would be an intolerable heresy ; but it is that. in order to bless Jesus more perfectly, we must begin by blessing Mary. Let us, then, say with all the true clients of our Lady against these false scrupulous devotees, O Mary, thou art blessed amongst all women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

External devotees are persons who make all devotion to our Blessed Lady consist in outward practices. They have no taste except for the exterior of this devotion, because they have no interior spirit of their own. They will say quantities of Rosaries with the greatest precipitation ; they will hear many Masses distractedly ; they will go without devotion to processions ; they will enrol themselves in all sorts of confraternities, without amending their lives, without doing any violence to their passions, or without imitating the virtues of that most holy Virgin . They have no love but for the sensible part of devotion, without having any relish for its solidity. If they have not sensible sweetness in their practices, they think they are doing nothing ; they get all out of joint, throw everything up, or do everything at random. The world

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is full of these exterior devotees ; and there are no people who are more critical of men of prayer, of those who foster an interior spirit as the essential thing, while they do not lightly account of that outward modesty which always accompanies true devotion.

Presumptuous devotees are sinners abandoned to their passions, or lovers of the world, who, under the fair name of Christians and clients of our Blessed Lady, conceal pride, avarice, impurity, drunkenness, anger, swearing, detraction, injustice, or some other sin. They sleep in peace in the midst of their bad habits, without doing any violence to themselves to correct their faults, under the pretext that they are devout to the Blessed Virgin. They promise themselves that God will pardon them ; that they will not be allowed to die without confession ; and that they will not be lost eternally because they say the Rosary, because they fast on Saturdays, because they belong to the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, or wear the scapular, or are enrolled in other congregations or wear the little habit or little chain of our Lady.* They will not believe us when we tell them

* See note farther on.

that their devotion is only an illusion of the devil, and a pernicious presumption likely to destroy their souls. They say that God is good and merciful ; that He has not made us to condemn us everlastingly ; that no man is without sin ; that they shall not die without confession ; that one good Peccavi at the hour of death is enough ; that they are devout to our Lady, that they wear the scapular ; and that they say daily, without reproach or vanity, seven Paters and Aves in her honour ; and that they sometimes say the Rosary and the Office of our Lady, besides fasting, and other things. To give authority to all this, and to blind themselves still further, they quote certain stories, which they have heard or read—it does not matter to them whether they be true or false—relating how people have died in mortal sin without confession ; and then, because in their life time they sometimes said some prayers, or went through some practices of devotion to our Lady how they have been raised to life again, in order to go to confession, or their soul been miraculously retained in their bodies till confession ; or how they have obtained from God at the moment of death contri-

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tion and pardon of their sins, and so have been saved ; and that they themselves expect similar favours. Nothing in Christianity is more detestable than this diabolical presumption. For how can we say truly that we love and honour our Blessed Lady, when by our sins we are pitilessly piercing, wounding, crucifying, and outraging Jesus Christ her Son ? If Mary laid down a law to herself to save by her mercy this sort of people, she would be authorising crime, and assisting to crucify and outrage her Son. Who would dare to think such a thought as that ?

I say, that thus to abuse devotion to our Lady, which, after devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, is the holiest and solidest of all devotions, is to be guilty of a horrible sacrilege, which, after the sacrilege of an unworthy communion, is the greatest and the least pardonable of all sacrileges.

I confess that, in order to be truly devout to our Blessed Lady, it is not absolutely necessary to be so holy as to avoid every sin, though this were to be wished ; but so much at least is necessary, and I beg you to lay it well to heart :

1. To have a sincere resolution to avoid, at least, all mortal sin, which outrages the Mother as well as the Son. 2. I would add also that to do violence to ourselves to avoid sin, to enrol ourselves in confraternities, to say the Rosary or other prayers, to fast on Saturdays, and the like, is wonderfully useful to the conversion of a sinner, however hardened: and if my reader is such a one, even if he has his foot in the abyss, I would counsel these things to him. Nevertheless, it must be on the condition that he will only practise these good works with the intention of obtaining from God, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the grace of contrition and the pardon of his sins, to conquer his evil habits, and not to remain quietly in the state of sin, in spite of the remorse of his conscience, the example of Jesus Christ and the Saints, and the maxims of the holy Gospel.

The *inconstant* devotees are those who are devout to our Blessed Lady by intervals and whims. Sometimes they are fervent and sometimes lukewarm. Sometimes they seem ready to do anything for her, and then, a little afterwards, they are not like the same people. They begin by taking up all

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the devotions to her, and enrolling themselves in the confraternities; and then they do not practise the rules with fidelity. They change like the moon; and Mary puts them under her feet with the crescent, because they are mutable, and unworthy to be reckoned among the servants of that faithful Virgin, whose clients have for their special graces fidelity and constancy. It were better for such persons to load themselves with fewer prayers and practices, and to fulfil them with faithfulness and love, in spite of the world, the devil, and the flesh.

We have still to mention the false devotees to our Blessed Lady who are the *hypocritical* devotees; who cloak their sins and sinful habits under her mantle, in order to pass in the eyes of men for what they are not.

There are also the *interested* devotees, who have recourse to our Lady only to gain some lawsuit, or to avoid some danger, or to be cured of some illness, or for some other similar necessity, without which they would forget her altogether. Both, however, of these two last classes are false de-

votees, and neither of them pass current before God and His holy Mother.

Let us, then, take great care not to be of the number of the *critical* devotees, who believe nothing and criticise everything; nor of the *scrupulous* devotees, who are afraid of being too devout to our Lady, out of respect to our Lord; nor of the *exterior* devotees, who make all their devotion consist in outward practices; nor of the *presumptuous* devotees, who, under the pretext of their false devotion to the Blessed Virgin, wallow in their sins; nor of the *inconstant* devotees, who by levity change their practices of devotion, or throw them up altogether on the least temptation; nor of the *hypocritical* devotees, who put themselves into confraternities, and wear the liveries of the Blessed Virgin, in order to pass for good people; nor, finally, of the *interested* devotees, who only have recourse to our Lady to be delivered from bodily evils, or to obtain temporal goods.

2. *On the Characters of True Devotion to our Blessed Lady.*

After having laid bare and condemned the false devotions to the most holy Virgin,

we must, in a few words, characterise the true devotion. It must be (1) *interior*, (2) *tender*, (3) *holy*, (4) *constant*, and (5) *disinterested*.

1. True devotion to our Lady is *interior* ; that is to say, it comes from the spirit and the heart. It flows from the esteem we have of her, the high idea we have formed of her greatness, and the love which we have for her.

2. It is *tender* ; that is to say, full of confidence in her, like a child's confidence in his loving mother. This confidence makes the soul have recourse to her in all its bodily or mental necessities, with much simplicity, trust, and tenderness. It implores the aid of its good Mother, at all times, in all places, and about all things ; in its doubts, that it may be enlightened ; in its wanderings, that it may be brought into the right path ; in its temptations, that it may be supported ; in its weaknesses, that it may be strengthened ; in its falls, that it may be lifted up ; in its discouragements, that it may be cheered ; in its scruples, that they may be taken away ; in its crosses, tolls, and disappointments of life, that it may be consoled under them. In a word,

in all its evils of body and mind, the soul's ordinary refuge is in Mary, without fearing to be importunate to her or to displease Jesus Christ.

3. True devotion to our Lady is *holy*; that is to say, it leads the soul to avoid sin, and to imitate in the Blessed Virgin particularly her profound humility, her lively faith, her blind obedience, her continual prayer, her universal mortification, her divine purity, her ardent charity, her heroic patience, her angelical sweetness, and her divine wisdom. These are the ten principal virtues of the most holy Virgin.

4. True devotion to our Lady is *constant*. It confirms the soul in good, and it does not let it easily abandon its spiritual exercises. It makes it courageous in opposing the world in its fashions and maxims, the flesh in its wearinesses and passions, and the devil in his temptations. So that a person truly devout to our Blessed Lady is neither changeable, irritable, scrupulous, nor timid. It is not that such a person does not fall, or change sometimes in the sensible feeling of devotion, or in the amount of devotion itself. But when he falls, he rises again by stretching out his hand to his

good Mother. If he loses the taste and relish of devotion, he does not disturb himself because of that ; for the just and faithful client of Mary lives on the faith of Jesus and Mary, and not on sentiments and sensibilities.

5. Lastly, true devotion to our Blessed Lady is *disinterested* ; that is to say, it inspires the soul not to seek itself but God only, and God in His holy Mother. A true client of Mary does not serve that august Queen from a spirit of lucre and interest, nor for its own good, whether temporal, corporal, or spiritual ; but exclusively because she merits to be served, and God alone in her. He does not love Mary precisely because she does him good, or because he hopes in her ; but because she is so worthy of love. It is on this account that he loves and serves her as faithfully in his disgusts and drynesses, as in his sweetnesses and sensible fervours. He loves her as much on Calvary, as at the marriage of Cana. Oh, how such a client of our Blessed Lady, who has no self-seeking in His service of her, is agreeable and precious in the eyes of God and of His holy Mother ! But in these days how rare is such a sight ! It is

that it may be less rare that I have taken my pen to put on paper what I have taught, in public and in private, during my missions for many years.

I have now said many things about the most holy Virgin ; but I have many more to say, and there are infinitely more which I shall omit, whether from ignorance, inability, or want of time, in the design which I have to form a true client of Mary, and a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Oh ! but my labour will have been well expended if this little writing, falling into the hands of a soul of good dispositions, a soul well born—born of God and of Mary, and not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man—should unfold to him, and should, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, inspire him with the excellence and the price of that true and solid devotion to our Blessed Lady, which I am going presently to describe. If I knew that my guilty blood could serve in engraving upon any one's heart the truths which I am writing in honour of my true Mother and Sovereign Mistress, I would use my blood instead of ink to form the letters, in the hope to find some good souls, who, by their

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fidelly to the practice which I teach, shall compensate my dear Mother and Mistress for the losses which she has suffered through my ingratitude and infidelities. I feel myself more than ever animated to believe and to hope all which I have had deeply engraven upon my heart, and have asked of God these many years, namely, that sooner or later the Blessed Virgin shall have more childrn, servants, and slaves of love than ever ; and that, by this means, Jesus Chist, my dear Master, shall reign more in hearts than ever.

I clearly foresee that raging beasts shall come in fury to tear with their diabolical teeth this little writing and him whom the Hoily Ghost has made use of to write it, or at least to smother it in the silence of a coffer, that it may not appear. They shall even attack and persecute those who shall read it and carry it out in practice. But what matter ? On the contrary, so much the better ! This very foresight encourages me, and makes me hope for a great success ; that is to say, for a great squadron of brave and valliant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, of both sexes, to combat the world, the devil, and corrupted nature in those

more than ever perilous times which are about to come! *Qui legit, intelligat. Qui potest capere, capiat*—"He who reads, let him understand. He who can receive it, let him receive it."

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PART SECOND.

ON THE MOST EXCELLENT DEVOTION TO OUR
BLESSED LADY, OR THE PERFECT CONSE-
CRATION TO JESUS BY MARY.

THERE are several interior practices of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Here are the principal of them stated compendiously. (1) To honour her as the worthy Mother of God, with the worship of hyperdulia ; that is to say, to esteem her and honour her above all the other Saints, as the masterpiece of grace, and the first after Jesus Christ, true God and true Man ; (2) to mediate her virtues, her privileges, and her actions ; (3) to contemplate her grandeurs ; (4) to make to her acts of love, of praise, of gratitude ; (5) to invoke her cordially ; (6) to offer ourselves to her, and unite ourselves with her ; (7) to do all our actions with the view of pleasing her ; (8) to begin, to continue, and to finish all our actions by

her, in her, and with her, in order that we may do them by Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, our Last End. We will presently explain this last practice.

True devotion to our Lady has also several exterior practices, of which the following are the chief : (1) to enrol ourselves in her confraternities, and enter her congregations ; (2) to join the religious orders instituted in her honour ; (3) to publish her praises ; (4) to give alms, to fast, and to undergo outward and inward mortifications in her honour ; (5) to wear her liveries, such as the Rosary, the scapular, or the little chain ; (6) to recite with attention, devotion, and modesty the holy Rosary, composed of fifteen decades of Hail Marys in honour of the fifteen principal mysteries of Jesus Christ, or five decades, which is the third of the Rosary, either in honour of the five Joyous Mysteries, which are the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity of Jesus Christ, the Purification, and the Finding of our Lord in the Temple ; or in honour of the five Sorrowful Mysteries, which are the Agony of our Lord in the Garden of Olives, His Scourging, His

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Crowning with Thorns, His Carrying of the Cross, and His Crucifixion ; or in honour of the five Glorious Mysteries, which are the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, the Assumption of our Blessed Lady body and soul into heaven, and her Coronation by the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. We may also say a Chaplet of six or seven decades in honour of the years which we believe our Lady lived on earth ; or the little Corona of the Blessed Virgin, composed of three Our Fathers and twelve Hail Marys, in honour of her crown of twelve stars, or privileges ; or the Office of our Lady, so universally received and recited in the Church ; or the Little Psalter of the holy Virgin, which St. Bonaventure has composed in her honour, and which is so tender and so devout that one cannot say it without being melted by it ; or fourteen Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honour of her fourteen joys ; or some other prayers, hymns, and canticles of the Church, such as the *Salve Regina*, the *Alma*, the *Ave Regina cœlorum*, or the *Regina cœli*, according to the different seasons ; or the *Ave Maris stella*, the *O Gloriosa Domina*,

the *Magnificat*, or some other practices of devotion of which books are full ; (7) to sing or have sung spiritual canticles in her honour ; (8) to make her a number of genuflexions or reverences, while saying, for example, every morning, sixty or a hundred times *Ave Maria, Virgo fidelis*, to obtain from God the grace by her to be faithful to the graces of God during the day ; and then again in the evening, *Ave Maria, Mater misericordiæ*, to ask pardon of God by her for the sins that we have committed during the day ; (9) to take care of her confraternities, to adorn her altars, to crown and ornament her images ; (10) to carry her images, or to have them carried, in procession, and to carry a picture or image of her about our own persons, as a mighty arm against the evil spirit ; (11) to have her images or her name carved, and placed in churches, or in houses, or on the gates and entrances into cities, churches, and houses ; (12) to consecrate ourselves to her in a special and solemn manner.

There are a quantity of other practices of true devotion towards the Blessed Virgin which the Holy Ghost has inspired into saintly souls, and which are very sanctify-

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ing ; they can be read at length in the *Paradise Opened* of Fr. Barry, the Jesuit, where he has collected a great number of devotions which the Saints have practised in honour of our Lady, devotions which serve marvellously to sanctify souls, provided they are performed as they ought to be ; that is to say, (1) with a good and pure intention to please God only, to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ as to our Last End, and to edify our neighbour ; (2) with attention, and without voluntary distraction ; (3) with devotion, equally avoiding precipitation or negligence ; (4) with modesty, and a respectful and edifying care of the postures of the body.

But after all, I loudly protest that, having read nearly all the books which profess to treat of devotion to our Lady, and having conversed familiarly and holily with the best and wisest of men of these latter times, I have never known nor heard of any practice of devotion towards her at all equal to the one which I wish now to unfold ; exacting from the soul as it does more sacrifices for God, emptying the soul more of itself and of its self-love, keeping it more faithfully in grace, and grace more faith-

fully in it, uniting it more perfectly and more easily to Jesus Christ ; and finally, being more glorious to God, more sanctifying to the soul, and more useful to our neighbour, than any other of the devotions to her.

As the essential of this devotion consists in the interior which it ought to form, it will not be equally comprehended by everybody. Some will stop at what is exterior in it, and will go no further, and these will be the greatest number. Some, in small number, will enter into its inward spirit ; but they will only mount but one step. Who will mount to the second step ? Who will get as far as the third ? Lastly, who will so advance as to make this devotion his habitual *state* ? He alone to whom the spirit of Jesus Christ shall have revealed the secret, the faultlessly faithful soul, whom He shall conduct there Himself, to advance from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, from light to light, until he arrives at the transformation of himself into Jesus Christ, and to the plenitude of His age on earth, and of His glory in heaven.

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I. IN WHAT CONSISTS THE PERFECT CONSECRATION TO JESUS CHRIST.

All our perfection consists in being conformed, united, and consecrated to Jesus Christ; and therefore the most perfect of all devotions is, without any doubt, that which the most perfectly conforms, unites, and consecrates us to Jesus Christ. Now, Mary being the most conformed of all creatures to Jesus Christ, it follows that of all devotions, that which most consecrates and conforms the soul to our Lord is devotion to His holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more is it consecrated to Jesus. Hence it comes to pass that the most perfect consecration to Jesus Christ is nothing else but a perfect and entire consecration of ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, and this is the devotion which I teach; or, in other words, a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy Baptism.

This devotion consists, then, in giving ourselves entirely and altogether to our Lady, in order to belong entirely and altogether to Jesus by her. We must give her (1) our body, with all its senses and its

members ; (2) our soul with all its powers ; (3) the exterior goods of fortune, whether present or to come ; (4) our interior and spiritual goods, which are our merits and our virtues, and our good works, past, present, and future. In a word, we must give her all we have in the order of nature and in the order of grace, and all that may become ours in future in the orders of nature, grace, and glory ; and this we must do without any reserve of so much as one farthing, one hair, or one least good action ; and we must do it also for all eternity, and we must do it further without pretending to, or hoping for, any other recompense for our offering and service, except the honour of belonging to Jesus Christ by Mary and in Mary, even though that sweet Mistress were not, as she always is, the most generous and the most grateful of creatures.

Here we must remark that there are two things in the good works which we do, namely, satisfaction and merit ; in other words, their satisfactory or impetratory value and their meritorious value. The satisfactory or impetratory value of a good work is the good action, so far as it satisfies for the pain due to sin, or obtains some

fresh increase of grace ; the meritorious value, or the merit, is the good action, so far as it merits grace now and eternal glory hereafter. Now, in this consecration of ourselves to our Lady, we give her all the satisfactory, impetratory, and meritorious value of our actions ; in other words, the satisfactions and merits of all our good works. We give her all our merits, graces, and virtues, not to communicate them to others—for our merits, graces and virtues are, properly speaking, incommunicable, and it is only Jesus Christ, who, in making Himself our surety with His Father, is able to communicate His merits—but we give her them to keep them, augment them, and embellish them for us, as we shall explain by and by. But we give her our satisfactions to communicate them to whom she likes, and for the greatest glory of God.

It follows from this that (1) by this devotion we give to Jesus Christ, in the most perfect manner, inasmuch as it is by Mary's hands, all we can give Him, and far more than by any other devotions, in which we give Him either part of our time, or a part of our good works, or a part of our satisfactions and mortifications ; whereas here

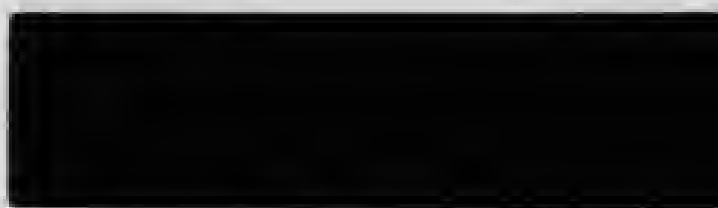
everything is given and consecrated to Him, even to the right of disposing of our interior goods, and of the satisfactions which we gain by our good works daily. This is more than we do even in a religious order. In religious orders we give God the goods of fortune by the vow of poverty, the goods of the body by the vow of chastity, our own will by the vow of obedience, and sometimes the liberty of the body by the vow of cloister. But we do not by those vows give Him the liberty or the right to dispose of the value of our good works ; and we do not strip ourselves, as far as a Christian man can do so, of that which is dearest and most precious to Him, namely, his merits and satisfactions.

2. A person who is thus voluntarily consecrated and sacrificed to Jesus Christ by Mary can no longer dispose of the value of any of his good actions. All he suffers, all he thinks, all the good he says or does, belongs to Mary, in order that she may dispose of it according to the will of her Son, and His greatest glory, without, however, that dependence prejudicing in any way the obligations of the state we may be in at present, or may be placed in for

the future ; for example, without prejudicing the obligations of a priest, who, by his office or otherwise, ought to apply the satisfactory or impetratory value of the holy Mass to some private person ; for we make the offering of this devotion only according to the order of God and the duties of our state.

3. We consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to the most holy Virgin and to Jesus Christ : to the most holy Virgin, as to the perfect means which Jesus Christ has chosen, whereby to unite Himself to us, and us to Him ; and to our Lord, as to our Last End, to whom we owe a'1 we are, as our Redeemer and our God.

I have said that this devotion may most justly be called a perfect renewal of the vows or promises of holy Baptism. For every Christian, before his Baptism, was the slave of the devil, seeing that he belonged to him. He has in his Baptism, by his own mouth or by his sponsor's, solemnly renounced Satan, his pomps and his works ; and he has taken Jesus Christ for his Master and Sovereign Lord, to depend upon Him in the quality of a slave of love. This is what we do by the present devotion. We





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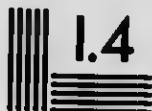
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renounce, as is expressed in the formula of consecration, the devil, the world, sin, and self; and we give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ by the hands of Mary. Nay, we even do something more; for, in Baptism, we ordinarily speak by the mouth of another, namely, by our godfather or godmother, and so we give ourselves to Jesus Christ not by ourselves but through another. But in this devotion we do it by ourselves, voluntarily, knowing what we are doing. Moreover, in holy Baptism, we do not give ourselves to Jesus by the hands of Mary, at least not in an expressed manner; and we do not give Him the value of our good actions. We remain entirely free after Baptism, either to apply them to whom we please or to keep them for ourselves. But, by this devotion, we give ourselves to our Lord expressly by the hands of Mary, and we consecrate to him the value of all our actions.

Men, says St. Thomas, make a vow at their Baptism to renounce the devil and all his pomps—*In Baptismo vovent homines abrenuntiare diabolo et pompis ejus*. This vow, says St. Augustine, is the greatest and most indispensable of all vows—*Votum maximum*

nostrum, quo vocimus nos in Christo esse mansuros. It is thus also that canonists speak: *Præcipuum votum est, quod in Baptismate facimus*—"The chief of vows is the one we make at Baptism." Yet who has kept this great vow? Who is it that faithfully performs the promises of holy Baptism? Have not almost all Christians swerved from the loyalty which they promised Jesus in their Baptism? Whence can come this universal disobedience, except from our oblivion of the promises and engagements, of holy Baptism, and from the fact that hardly any one ratifies of himself the contract he made with God by those who stood sponsors for him? This is so true, that the Council of Sens, convoked by order of Louis the Débonnaire to remedy the disorders of Christians, which were then so great, judged that the principal cause of that corruption of morals arose from the oblivion and ignorance in which men lived of the engagements of holy Baptism; and it could think of no better means for remedying so great an evil than to persuade Christians to renew the vows and promises of Baptism.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent,

the faithful interpreter of that holy Council, exhorts the parish priests to do the same thing : and to induce the people to remember themselves, and to believe that they are bound and consecrated to our Lord Jesus Christ, as slaves to their Redeemer and Lord. These are 'ts words : "*Parochus fidelem populum ad . . . rationem cohortabitur ut sciat æquissimum esse. . . nos ipsos non secus ac mancipia Redemptori nostro ac Domino in perpetuum addicere et consecrare*" (Cat. Conc. Trid., par. i. c. iii. sec. 12). "The parish priest shall exhort the faithful people so that they may know that it is most just. . . that we should devote and consecrate ourselves for ever to our Redeemer and Lord as His very slaves."

Now, if the Councils, the Fathers, and experience even, show us that the best means of remedying the irregularities of Christians is by making them call to mind the obligations of their Baptism and persuading them to renew now the vows they made then, does it not stand to reason that we shall do it in a perfect manner, by this devotion and consecration of ourselves to our Lord, through His holy Mother ? I say in a perfect manner ; because in thus con-

secrating ourselves to Him we make use of the most perfect of all means, namely, the Blessed Virgin.

No one can object to this devotion as either a new or an indifferent one. It is not new; because the Councils, the Fathers, and many authors both ancient and modern, speak of this consecration to our Lord, in renewing the vows and promises of Baptism, as of a thing anciently practised, and which they counsel to all Christians. Neither is it a matter of indifference; because the principal source of all disorders, and consequently of the eternal perdition of Christians, comes from their forgetfulness and indifference about this practice. But some may object that this devotion, in making us give to our Lord by our Lady's hands the value of all our good works, prayers, mortifications, and alms, puts us into a state of incapacity for succouring the souls of our parents, friends, and benefactors.

I answer them as follows: 1. That it is not credible that our parents, friends, and benefactors, should suffer any damage from the fact of our being devoted and consecrated without exception to the service of

our Lord and His holy Mother. To think this, would be to think unworthily of the goodness and power of Jesus and Mary, who know well how to assist our parents, friends, and benefactors out of our own little spiritual revenue or by other ways.

2. This practice does not hinder us from praying for others, whether dead or living, although the application of our good works depends on the will of our Blessed Lady. On the contrary, it is this very thing which will lead us to pray with more confidence; just as a rich person, who has given all his wealth to his prince, in order to honour him the more, would beg the prince all the more confidently to give an alms to one of his friends who should demand it. It would even be conferring a fresh favour on the prince, and giving him a fresh pleasure, to give him an occasion of testifying his gratitude towards a person who stripped himself to clothe him, and who impoverished himself to honour him. We must say the same of our Blessed Lord and of our Lady. They will never let themselves be overcome in gratitude. Some one, perhaps, may say, If I give our Blessed Lady all the value of my actions to apply

it to whom she wills, I shall have to suffer perhaps, a long time in purgatory. This objection, which comes from self-love and ignorance of the generosity of God and His holy Mother, demolishes itself. A fervent and generous soul, who prizes the interests of God more than his own ; who gives God all he has, without reserve, so that he can do nothing more ; who breathes only the glory and reign of Jesus Christ by His holy Mother, and who makes an entire sacrifice of himself to bring it about—will this generous and liberal soul, I say, be more punished in the other world because it has been more liberal and more disinterested than others ? Far, indeed, will that be from the truth ! It is towards that soul, as we shall see, in conclusion, that our Lord and His holy Mother are most liberal in this world and in the other, in the orders of nature, grace, and glory.

But we must now, as briefly as we can, run over the motives which ought to recommend this devotion to us, the marvellous effects it produces in the souls of the faithful, and its practices.

II. THE MOTIVES OF THIS PERFECT CONSECRATION.

First Motive, which shows us the excellence of this consecration of ourselves by the hands of Mary. If we can conceive on earth no employment more lofty than the service of God—if the least servant of God is richer, more powerful, and more noble than all the kings and emperors of earth, unless they also are the servants of God—what must be the riches, the power, and the dignity of the faithful and perfect servant of God, who is devoted to His service entirely and without reserve, to the utmost extent that is possible? Such is the faithful and loving slave of Jesus in Mary, who has given himself up utterly to the service of that King of kings, by the hands of His holy Mother, and has reserved nothing for himself. Not all the gold of earth nor all the beauties of the heavens can repay him.

The other congregations, associations, and confraternities, erected in honour of our Lord and His holy Mother, and which do such immense good in Christendom, do not make us give everything without reserve. They only prescribe to their members certain practices

and actions to satisfy their obligations. They leave them free for all the other actions and times of their lives. But this devotion makes us give to Jesus and Mary, without reserve, all our thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings, all the times of our life, in such sort that whether we wake or sleep, whether we eat or drink, whether we do great actions or very little ones, it is always true to say that whatever we do, even without thinking of it, is, by virtue of our offering, at least, if it has not been expressly retracted, done for Jesus and Mary. What a consolation is this!

Moreover, as I have already said, there is no other practice equal to this for enabling us to get rid with facility of a certain proprietorship, which imperceptibly insinuates itself into our best actions. Our good Jesus gives us this great grace in recompense for the heroic and disinterested action of making a cession to Him, by the hands of His holy Mother, of all the value of our good works. If He gives a hundredfold even in this world to those who for His love quit outward and temporal and perishable goods, what will that hundredfold be which He will give to the man who sacrifices for Him even his inward and spiritual goods!

Jesus, our great friend, has given Himself to us without reserve, body and soul, virtues, graces, and merits. *Se toto totum me comparavit.* said St. Bernard—"He has bought the whole of me by the whole of Himself." Is it not, then, a simple matter of justice and of gratitude that we should give Him all that we can give Him? He has been the first to be liberal towards us; let us, at least, be the second; and then, in life and death, and throughout all eternity, we shall find Him still more liberal. *Cum liberali liberalis erit*—"With the liberal He will be liberal."

The Second Motive, which shows us how just it is in itself, and advantageous to Christians, to consecrate themselves entirely to the Blessed Virgin by this practice, in order to belong more perfectly to Jesus Christ.

This good Master has not disdained to shut Himself up in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, as a captive and as a loving slave, and to be subject and obedient to her for thirty years. It is here, I repeat it, that the human mind loses itself when it seriously reflects on the conduct of the Incarnate Wisdom, who has not willed, though He

might have done so, to give Himself to men directly, but through the Blessed Virgin. He did not will to come into the world at the age of a perfect man, independent of others, but like a poor and little babe, dependent on the cares and nourishment of this holy Mother. He is that Infinite Wisdom, who had a boundless desire to glorify God His Father, and to save men ; and yet He found no more perfect means, no shorter way to do it, than to submit Himself in all things to the Blessed Virgin, not only during the first eight, ten, or fifteen years of His life, like other children, but for thirty years ! He gave more glory to God His Father during all that time of submission and dependence to our Blessed Lady than He would have given Him if He had employed those thirty years in working miracles, in preaching to the whole earth, and in converting all men, seeing that His heavenly Father and Himself had ruled it thus : *Quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper*—"I always do the things which please Him." Oh, how highly we glorify God, when, after the example of Jesus, we submit ourselves to Mary !

Having, then, before our eyes an example

so plain and so well-known to the whole world, are we so senseless as to imagine that we can find a more perfect or a shorter means of glorifying God than that of submitting ourselves to Mary, after the example of her Son? Let us recall here, as a proof of the dependence we ought to have on our Blessed Lady, what I have said above in bringing forward the example which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost give of this dependence. The Father has not given, and does not give, His Son except by her; He has no children but by her, and communicates no grace but by her. God the Son has not been formed for the whole world in general except by her; and He is not daily formed and engendered except by her, in the union with the Holy Ghost; neither does He communicate His merits and His virtues except by her. The Holy Ghost has not formed Jesus Christ except by her; neither does He form the members of our Lord's Mystical Body except by her; and through her alone does He dispense His favours and His gifts. After so many and such pressing examples of the Most Holy Trinity, can we, without an extreme blindness, dispense ourselves from Mary, and not

consecrate ourselves to her, and depend on her to go to God, and to sacrifice ourselves to God ?

Here are some Latin passages of the Fathers, which I have chosen to prove what has just been said :

“ Duo filii Mariæ sunt, homo Deus et homo purus, unus corporaliter, et alterius spiritaliter Mater est Maria ” (St. Bonaventure and Origen).

“ Hæc est voluntas Dei, qui totum nos vult habere per Mariam, ac proinde si quid spei, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare ” (St. Bernard).

“ Omnia dona, virtutes gratiæ ipsius Spiritus Sancti, quibus vult, et quando vult, quomodo vult, et quantum vult, per ipsius manus administrantur ” (St. Bernardine).

“ Quia indigna eras cui donaretur, datum est Mariæ, ut per illam acciperes quidquid haberes ” (St. Bernard).

God, says St. Bernard, seeing that we are unworthy to receive His graces immediately from His own hand, gives them to Mary, in order that we may have through her whatever He wills to give us ; and He also finds His glory in receiving through the hands of Mary the gratitude, respect, and love which

we owe Him for His benefits. It is most just, then, that we shall imitate this conduct of God, in order, as the same St. Bernard says, that the grace should return to its Author by the same canal through which it came : *Ut eodem alveo ad largitorem gratia gratia redeat, quo fluxit*—"That grace should return to the giver of grace by the same channel through which it came."

This is precisely what our devotion does. We offer and consecrate all we are and all we have to the Blessed Virgin, in order that our Lord may receive through her mediation the glory and the gratitude which we owe Him. We acknowledge ourselves unworthy and unfit to approach His Infinite Majesty by ourselves ; and it is on this account that we avail ourselves of the intercession of the most holy Virgin.

Moreover, this devotion is a practice of great humility, which God loves above all the other virtues. A soul which exalts itself abases God ; a soul which abases itself exalts God. God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble. If you abase yourself, thinking yourself unworthy to appear before Him and to draw nigh to Him, He descends, and lowers Himself to come to

you, to take pleasure in you, and to exalt you in spite of yourself.

On the contrary, when you are hardy enough to approach God without a mediator, God flies from you, and you cannot reach Him. Oh, how He loves humility of heart ! it is to this humility that our peculiar devotion engages us, because it teaches us never to draw nigh of ourselves to our Lord, however sweet and merciful He may be, but always to avail ourselves of the intercession of our Blessed Lady, whether it be to appear before God, or to speak to Him, or to draw near to Him, or to offer Him anything, or to unite and consecrate ourselves to Him.

Third Motive. 1. The most holy Virgin, who is a Mother of sweetness and mercy, and who never lets herself be vanquished in love and liberality, seeing that we give ourselves entirely to her, to honour and to serve her, and for that end strip ourselves of all that is dearest to us in order to adorn her, meets us in the same spirit. She also gives her whole self, and gives it in an unspeakable manner, to him who gives all to her. She causes him to be engulfed in the abyss of her graces. She adorns him with her merits ; she supports him with her power ;

she illuminates him with her light ; she inflames him with her love ; she communicates to him her virtues, her humility, her faith, her purity, and the rest. She makes herself his ball, his supplement, and his dear all towards Jesus. In a word, as that person is all consecrated to Mary, so is Mary all for him ; after such a fashion that we can say of that perfect servant and child of Mary what St. John the Evangelist said of himself, that he took the holy Virgin for all his goods : *Acceptit eam discipulus in sua*—
“The disciple took her for his own.”

It is this which produces in the soul, if it is faithful, a great distrust, contempt, and hatred of self, and a great confidence and a great self-abandonment in the Blessed Virgin, its good Mistress. A man no longer, as before, leans on his own dispositions, intentions, merits and good works ; because, having made an entire sacrifice of them to Jesus Christ by that good Mother, he has but one treasure now, where all his goods are laid up, and that is no longer in himself : for his treasure is Mary. It is this which makes him approach our Lord without servile or scrupulous fear, and pray to him with great confidence. It is this which

makes him enter into the sentiments of the devout and learned Abbot Rupert, who, making an allusion to the victory that Jacob gained over the angei, said to our Blessed Lady these beautiful words : “ O Mary, my Princess, Immaculate Mother of a God-man, Jesus Christ, I desire to wrestle with that man, nameiy, the Divine Word, not armed with my own merits, but with yours” — *O Domina, Dei genitrix Maria, et incorrupta Mater Dei et Hominis, non meis, sed tuis armatus meritis, cum isto Viro, seu Verbo Dei, luctari cupio* (Rup., Prolog. in Cantic.).

Oh, how strong and mighty we are with Jesus Christ, when we are armed with the worthy merits and intercession of the Mother of God, who, as St. Augustine says, has lovingly vanquished the Most High.

2. As by this practice we give to our Lord by His Mother's hands all our good works, that good Mother purifies them, embellishes them, and makes them acceptable to her Son.

(1) She purifies them of all the soil of self-love, and of that imperceptible attachment to the creature which slips incessantly into our best actions. As soon as they are in her most pure and fruitful hands, those same

hands, which have never been sullied or idle, and which purify whatever they touch, take away from the present which we make to her all that was spoilt or imperfect about it.

(2) She embellishes our works, in adorning them with her own merits and virtues. It is as if a peasant, wishing to gain the friendship and benevolence of the king, went to the queen, and presented her with a fruit, which was his whole revenue, in order that she might present it to the king. The queen having accepted the poor little offering from the peasant, would place the fruit on a large and beautiful dish of gold, and so, on the peasant's behalf, would present it to the king. Then the fruit, however unworthy in itself to be a king's present, would become worthy of his majesty, because of the dish of gold on which it rested and the person who presented it.

(3) She presents these good works to Jesus Christ ; for she keeps nothing of what is given for herself, as if she was our last end. She refers it all faithfully to Jesus. If we give to her, we give necessarily to Jesus. If we praise her or glorify her, we at once praise and glorify Jesus. As of old, when

St. Elizabeth praised her, so now, when we praise and bless her, she sings herself, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*—"My soul doth magnify the Lord."

(4) She persuades Jesus to accept these good works, however little and poor the present may be for that Saint of saints and that King of kings. When we present anything to Jesus by ourselves, and relying on our own industry and disposition, Jesus examines the offering, and often rejects it because of the stains it has contracted through self-love; just as of old He rejected the sacrifices of the Jews when they were full of their own will. But when we present Him anything by the pure and virginal hands of His Well-beloved, we take Him by His weak side, if it is allowable to use such a term. He does not consider so much the thing that is given Him, as the Mother who gives it. He does not consider so much whence the offering comes, as by whom it comes. Thus Mary, who is never repelled and always well received by her Son, makes everything she presents to Him, great or small, acceptable to His Majesty. For Jesus to receive it and to take complacence in it, is enough that Mary should present it. This

is the great counsel which St. Bernard used to give to those whom he conducted to perfection : " When you want to offer anything to God, take care to offer it by the most agreeable and worthy hands of Mary, unless you wish to have it rejected "—*Modicum quod offerre desideras manibus Mariæ offerendum tradere cura si non vis sustinere repulsam.*

Is not this what nature itself suggests to the little, with regard to the great, as we have already seen ? Why should not grace lead us to do the same thing with regard to God, who is infinitely exalted above us, and before whom we are less than atoms ? seeing, moreover, that we have an advocate so powerful that she is never refused ; so full of inventions, that she knows all the secret ways of gaining the heart of God ; and so good and charitable, that she repels no one, however little and wretched he may be.

I shall bring forward presently the true figure of these truths in the history of Jacob and Rebecca.

Fourth Motive. This devotion, faithfully practised, is an excellent means of making sure that the value of all our good works shall be employed for the greatest glory of

God. Scarcely any one acts for that noble end, although we are all under an obligation to do so. Either we do not know where the greatest glory of God is to be found, or we do not wish to find it. But our Blessed Lady, to whom we cede the value and the merit of the good works we may do, knows most perfectly where the greatest glory of God is to be found ; and, inasmuch as she never does anything except for the greatest glory of God, a perfect servant of that good Mistress, who is wholly consecrated to her, may say with the hardest assurance, that the value of all his actions, thoughts, and words is employed for the greatest glory of God, at least unless he expressly revokes his offering. Is there any consolation equal to this, for a soul who loves God with a pure and disinterested love, and who prizes the glory and interests of God far beyond his own ?

Fifth Motive. This devotion is an *easy, short, perfect, and secure* way of arriving at union with our Lord, in which the perfection of a Christian consists.

1. It is an *easy* way. It is the way which Jesus Christ Himself trod in coming to us, and in which there is no obstacle in arriving

at Him. It is true that we can attain to divine union by other roads ; but it is by many more crosses and strange deaths, and with many more difficulties, which we shall find it hard to overcome. We must pass through obscure nights, through combats, through strange agonies, over craggy mountains, through cruel thorns, and over frightful deserts. But by the path of Mary we pass more gently and more tranquilly. We do find, it is true, great battles to fight and great hardships to master ; but that good Mother and Mistress makes herself so present and so near to her faithful servants, to enlighten them in their darknesses and their doubts, to strengthen them in their fears, and to sustain them in their struggles and their difficulties, that in truth this virginal path to find Jesus Christ is a path of roses and honey compared with the other paths. There have been some Saints, but they have been in small numbers, who have passed by this sweet path to go to Jesus, because the Holy Ghost, faithful Spouse of Mary, has by a singular grace disclosed it to them. Such were St. Ephrem, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Bernadine, St. Bonaventure, St. Francis of Sales, and

others. But the rest of the Saints, who are the greater number, although they have all had devotion to our Blessed Lady, have not on that account, or at least very little, entered upon this way. This is why they have had to pass through ruder and more dangerous trials.

How comes it, then, some of the faithful servants of Mary will say to me, that the loyal clients of this good Mother have so many occasions of suffering, nay, even more than others who are not so devout to her? They are contradicted, they are persecuted, they are calumniated, the world cannot endure them; or, again, they walk in interior darkneses, and in deserts where there is not the least drop of the dew of heaven. If this devotion to our Blessed Lady makes the road to Jesus easier, how comes it that they who follow it are the most despised of men? I reply, that it is quite true that the most faithful servants of the Blessed Virgin, being also her greatest favourites, receive from her the greatest graces and favours of heaven, which are crosses. But I maintain that it is also the servants of Mary who carry these crosses with more facility, more merit, and

more glory. That which would stay the progress of another a thousand times over, or perhaps would make him fall, does not once arrest their steps, but rather enables them to advance; because that good Mother, all full of the graces and unction of the Holy Ghost, preserves all the crosses, which she cuts for them, in the sugar of her maternal sweetness, so that they swallow them gaily, like preserved fruits, however bitter they may be in themselves; and I believe that a person who wishes to be devout, and to live piously in Jesus Christ, and consequently to suffer persecutions, and carry his cross daily, will never carry great crosses, or carry them joyously or perseveringly, without a tender devotion to our Lady, which is the sweetmeat and confection of crosses; just as a person would not be able to eat unripe fruits, without a great effort which he could hardly keep up, unless they had been preserved in sugar.

2. This devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a *short* road to find Jesus Christ, both because it is a road which we do not stray from, and because, as I have just said, it is a road we tread with joy and facility, and, by consequence, with promptitude. *We make more progress in a brief period of sub-*

mission to and dependence on Mary than in whole years of our own will and of resting upon ourselves. A man obedient and submissive to Mary shall sing the signal victories which he shall gain over his enemies. They will try to hinder his advancing, or to make him retrace his steps, or to fall. This is true. But with the support, the aid, and the guidance of Mary, without failing, without drawing back one step, without even slackening his pace, he shall advance with giant strides towards Jesus, along the same path by which he knows that Jesus also came to us with giant strides, and in the briefest space of time. Why do you think that Jesus lived so short a time on earth, and of those few years spent nearly all of them in subjection and obedience to His Mother? Ah, this is the truth: that He was perfected indeed in a short time, but that He lived a long time, longer than Adam, whose fall He had come to repair, although the patriarch lived above nine hundred years. Jesus Christ lived a long time, because He lived in complete subjection to His holy Mother, and closely united with her, in order that He might thus obey God His Father. For the Holy Ghost says that a man who honours his mother is like a man

who layeth up a treasure : that is to say, he who honours Mary his Mother up to the point of subjecting himself to her and obeying her in all things, will soon become exceedingly rich : (1) because he is every day amassing treasures by the secret of that philosopher's stone : *Qui honorat matrem quasi qui thesaurizat*—"He who honours his mother is as one who lays up a treasure" : (2) because it is the bosom of Mary which has surrounded and engendered a perfect man, and has had the capacity of containing Him whom the whole universe could neither contain nor comprehend—it is, I say, in the bosom of Mary that they who are youthful become elders in light, in holiness, in experience, and in wisdom ; and that we arrive in a few years at the fulness of the age of Jesus Christ.

3. This practice of devotion to our Blessed Lady is also a *perfect* path by which to go and unite ourselves to Jesus, because the divine Mary is the most perfect and the most holy of creatures, and because Jesus, who has come to us most perfectly, took no other road for His great and admirable journey. The Most High, the Incomprehensible, the Inaccessible, He Who Is, has deigned to come us, little worms of earth

who are nothing. How has He done this? The Most High has come down to us perfectly and divinely by the humble Mary. He has come to us by her, without losing anything of His divinity, and sanctity. *So it is by Mary that the unspeakably little are to ascend perfectly and divinely, without any fear, to the Most High.* The Incomprehensible has allowed Himself to be comprehended and perfectly contained by the little Mary, without losing anything of His Imensity. So also is it by the little Mary that we must let ourselves be held and guided perfectly without any reserve. The Inaccessible has drawn near to us, and has closely united Himself to us perfectly, and even personally, to our humanity by Mary, without losing any of His Majesty. So also is it by Mary that we must draw near to God, and unite ourselves perfectly and closely to His Majesty without fear of being repulsed. In a word, He Who Is has designed to come to that which is not, and to make that which is not become God in Him Who Is; and He has done this perfectly in giving Himself and subjecting Himself entirely to the young Virgin Mary without ceasing to be in time He who is eternal. In like manner it is by Mary that we, who are nothing, can

become like to God by grace and glory by giving ourselves to her so perfectly and entirely as to be nothing in ourselves but everything in her, without fear of delusion.

Make for me, if you will, a new road to go to Jesus, and pave it with all the merits of the Blessed, adorn it with all their heroic virtues, illuminate and embellish it with all the lights and beauties of the Angels, and let all the Angels and Saints be there themselves to escort, defend, and sustain those who are ready to walk there; and yet in truth, in simple truth, I say boldly, and I repeat that I say truly, I would prefer to this new perfect path the immaculate way of Mary. *Posui immaculatam viam meam*. It is the way without any stain or spot, without original or actual sin, without shadow or darkness. When my sweet Jesus in His glory comes a second time on earth, as it is most certain He will do, to reign there, He will choose no other way for His journey than the divine Mary, by whom He came the first time so surely and so perfectly. But there will be a difference between His first and His last coming. The first time He came secretly and hiddenly: the second time He will come gloriously and resplendently. But both times He will come per-

fectly, because both times He will come by Mary. Alas! here is a mystery which is not understood. *Hic taceat omnis lingua*—
“Here let all tongues be mute.”

4. This devotion to our Blessed Lady is also a *secure* way to go to Jesus, and to acquire perfection by uniting us to Him.

(1). It is a *secure* way, because the practice which I am teaching is not new. M. Boudon, who died a little while ago in the odour of sanctity, says in a book which he composed on this devotion that it is so ancient we cannot fix precisely the date of its commencement. It is, however, certain that for more than seven hundred years we find traces of it in the Church. St. Odilon, the Abbot of Cluny, who lived about the year 1040, was one of the first who publicly practised it in France; as it is remarked in his life. Cardinal Peter Damien relates that in the year 1036 the Blessed Marino, his brother, made himself a slave of the Blessed Virgin in the presence of his director in a most edifying manner. He put a rope round his neck, took the discipline, and laid on the altar a sum of money to mark his devotion and consecration to our Lady; and he continued this devotion so faithfully during his whole life that he

deserved to be visited and consoled at his death by his good Mistress, and to receive from her mouth the promise of Paradise in recompense for his services.

Cesarius Boliandus mentions an illustrious cavalier, Vautier de Birbac, who about the year 1500 consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin. This devotion was also practised by several private persons up to the seventeenth century, when it became public.

Father Simon de Roxas, of the order of the Redemption of Captives, and preacher of Philip the Third, made this devotion popular in Spain and Germany; and through the instance of Philip the Third, he obtained of Gregory the Fifteenth ample indulgences for those who practised it. Father de Los Rios, the Augustinian, devoted himself with his intimate friend, Father Roxas, to spread this devotion, both by preaching and writing, through Spain and Germany. He composed a thick volume called *Hierarchia Mariana*, in which he treats with as much piety as learning of the antiquity, excellence, and solidity of this devotion. The Theatin Fathers in the seventeenth century established this devotion in Italy, Sicily, and Savoy. Father Stanislas Phalacius, the Jesuit, increased this devotion wonderfully in

Poland. Father de Los Rios, in his work just cited, quotes the names of princes, princesses, dukes, and cardinals of different kingdoms who embraced this devotion.

Cornellus à Lapide, as much recommended for his piety as for his profound erudition, having received a commission from several theologians to examine this devotion, did so with great maturity and deliberation, and praised it in a manner which we might have expected from his well-known piety; and many other distinguished persons have followed his example.

The Jesuit Fathers, always zealous in the service of our Blessed Lady, presented, in the name of the Sodalists of Cologne, a little treatise on this devotion to the Duke Ferdinand of Bavaria, who was then Archbishop of Cologne. He gave it his approbation, and permission to print it; and exhorted all the parish priests and religious of his diocese to promote the devotion as much as ever they could. Cardinal Berulle, whose memory is in benediction through all France, was one of the most zealous in spreading this devotion in that country, in spite of all the calumnies and persecutions which he suffered from critics and libertines.

They accused him of novelty and superstition. They wrote and published against him a libel, in order to defame him ; and they made use, or rather it was the devil by their ministry, of a thousand subtleties to hinder his spreading the devotion in France. But that great and holy man only answered their calumnies by his patience ; and he met the objections contained in their libel by a short treatise, in which he most convincingly refuted them. He showed them that the devotion was founded on the example of Jesus Christ, on the obligations which we have to Him, and on the vows which we have made in holy Baptism. It was chiefly by this last reason that he shut his adversaries' mouths, making them see that this consecration to the holy Virgin, and to Jesus Christ by her hands, is nothing else than a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of Baptism. He has said many beautiful things on this practice, which can be read in his works.

We may also see in M. Boudon's book the different Popes who have approved this devotion, the theologians who have examined it, the persecutions they have undergone and have overcome, and the thousands of persons who have embraced it without any

Pope having ever condemned it. Indeed, we cannot see how it could be condemned without overturning the foundations of Christianity. It is clear, then, that this devotion is not new ; and that if it is not common, it is because it is too precious to be relished and practised by all the world.*

(2) This devotion is a secure means of going to Jesus Christ, because it is the very characteristic of our Blessed Lady to conduct us surely to Jesus, just as it is the very characteristic of Jesus to conduct us surely to the Eternal Father. Spiritual persons, therefore, must not fall into the false belief that Mary can be a hindrance to them in attaining to divine union ; for is it possible that she who has found grace before God for the whole world in general, and for each one in particular, should be a hindrance to a soul in finding the great grace of union with Him ? Can it be possible that she who has been all full and superabounding with graces, so united and transformed into God that it has been a kind of necessity that He should be incarnate in her, should be a stumbling-block in the way of a soul's perfect union with God ? It is quite true that the view of other creatures, however holy,

may perhaps at certain times retard divine union. But this cannot be said of Mary, as I have remarked before and shall never weary of repeating. One reason why so few souls come to the fulness of the age of Jesus Christ is because Mary, who is as much as ever the fruitful Spouse of the Holy Ghost, is not sufficiently formed in their hearts. He who wishes to have the fruit well ripened and well formed must have the tree that produces it; he who wishes to have the fruit of life, Jesus Christ, must have the tree of life, which is Mary; he who wishes to have in himself the operation of the Holy Ghost must have His faithful and indissoluble Spouse, the divine Mary, who makes Him fertile and fruit-bearing as we have said elsewhere.

Be persuaded, then, that the more you look at Mary in your prayers, contemplations, actions, and sufferings, if not with a distinct and definite view, at least with a general and imperceptible one, the more perfectly will you find Jesus Christ, who is always with Mary, great, powerful, operative, and incomprehensible.

Thus, so far from the divine Mary, all absorbed in God, being an obstacle to the

perfect in their attaining to union with God, there has never been up to this point, and there never will be, any creature who will aid us more efficaciously in this great work, whether by the graces she will communicate to us for this effect—for, as a Saint has said, no one can be filled with the thought of God except by her, *Nemo cogitatione Dei repletur, nisi per te*—or whether by freedom from the illusions and trickeries of the evil spirit, which she will guarantee to us.

Where Mary is, there the evil spirit is not. One of the most infallible marks we can have of our being conducted by the good Spirit is our being very devout to Mary, our thinking often of her, and our speaking often of her.

This last is the thought of a Saint, who adds, that as respiration is a certain sign the body is not dead, the frequent thought and loving invocation of Mary is a certain sign the soul is not dead by sin.

As it is Mary alone, says the Church (and the Holy Ghost, who guides the Church), who alone makes all heresies come to naught (*Sola cunctas hæreses interemisti in universo mundo*)—"Thou alone hast de-

stroyed all heresies in the whole world"), we may be sure that, however critics may grumble, no faithful client of Mary will ever fall into heresy or illusion, at least formal. He may very well err materially, take falsehood for truth, and the evil spirit for the good; and yet he will do even this with more difficulty than others. But sooner or later he will acknowledge his material fault and error; and when he knows it he will not be in any way self-opinionated in believing and maintaining what he had once thought true. Whoever, then, wishes to put aside the fear of illusion, which is the besetting timidity of men of prayer, and to advance in the way of perfection, and surely and perfectly to find Jesus Christ, let him embrace with great-heartedness (*corde magno et animo volenti*—"with a great heart and a willing mind") this devotion to our Blessed Lady, which perhaps he has not known before; let him enter into this excellent way, which was unknown to him and which I now point out: *Excellentiorem viam vobis demonstro*—"I show you a more excellent way."

It is a path trodden by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, our sole Head. One of

His members in passing by the same road cannot deceive himself. It is an *easy* road, because of the fulness of the grace and unction of the Holy Ghost, which fills it to overflowing. No one wearies there; no one walking there has ever to retrace his steps. It is a *short* road, which leads us to Jesus in a little time. It is a *perfect* road, where there is no mud, no dust, nor the least spot of sin. Lastly, it is a *secure* road, which conducts us to Jesus Christ and life eternal in a straight and secure manner, without turning to the right hand or to the left. Let us, then, set forth upon that road, and walk there day and night, until we come to the fulness of the age of Jesus Christ.

Sixth Motive. This practice of devotion gives to those who make use of it faithfully a great interior liberty, which is the liberty of the children of God. For as by this devotion we make ourselves slaves of Jesus Christ, and consecrate ourselves entirely to Him in this capacity, our Good Master, in recompense for the loving captivity in which we put ourselves, (1) takes all scruple and servile fear from the soul, with everything that is capable of contracting, imprisoning, or confusing it; (2) He

enlarges the heart by a firm confidence in God, making it look at Him as a Father ; and (3) He inspires us with a tender and filial love.

Without stopping to prove these truths by arguments, I shall be content to quote here what I have read in the life of Mother Agnes of Jesus, a Dominicaness of the convent of Langeac, in Auvergne ; who died there, in the odour of sanctity, in the year 1634. When she was only seven years old, and was suffering from great spiritual pains, she heard a voice which told her that if she wished to be delivered from all her pains, and to be protected against all her enemies, she was as quickly as possible to make herself the slave of Jesus and His most holy Mother. She had no sooner returned to the house than she gave herself up entirely to Jesus and His Mother in this capacity, although up to that time she had not known so much as what the devotion meant. Having found an iron chain she put it round her body, and wore it to her death. After this action, all her pains and scruples ceased, and she found herself in a great peace and dilatation of heart. It was this which engaged her to teach the

devotion to many persons, who made great progress in it, and, among others, to M. Olier, the founder of St. Sulpice, and to many priests and ecclesiastics of the same seminary. One day our Lady appeared to her, and put round her neck a chain of gold, to testify the joy she had in Mother Agnes having made herself her Son's slave and her own; and St. Cecilia, who accompanied our Lady in that apparition, said to the religious: "Happy are the faithful slaves of the Queen of Heaven; for they shall enjoy true liberty."—*Tibi servire libertas.*

Serenth Motive. Another consideration which may engage us to embrace this practice is that of the great good which our neighbour will receive from it. For by this practice we exercise charity towards him in an eminent manner, seeing that we give him by Mary's hands all that is most precious to ourselves—which is the satisfactory and impetratory value of all our good works, without excepting the least good thought, or the least little suffering. We agree that all the satisfactions we may have acquired, or may acquire up to the moment of our death, should be employed

at our Lady's will, either for the conversion of sinners, or for the deliverance of souls from Purgatory.

Is not this to love our neighbour perfectly? Is not this to be the true disciple of Jesus Christ, who is always to be recognised by his charity? Is not this the way to convert sinners, without any fear of vanity; and to deliver souls from Purgatory, without scarcely doing anything but what we are obliged to do by our state of life?

To understand the excellence of this motive, we must understand also what a good it is to convert a sinner, or to deliver a soul from Purgatory. It is an infinite good, which is greater than to create heaven and earth, because we give to a soul the possession of God. If by this practice we deliver but one soul in our life from Purgatory, or convert but one sinner, would not that be enough to induce a truly charitable man to embrace it? But we must remark that, inasmuch as our good works pass through the hands of Mary, they receive an augmentation of purity, and consequently of merit, and of satisfactory and impetratory value. On this account they become more capable of solacing the souls in Purgatory and of

converting sinners than if they did not pass by the virginal and liberal hands of Mary. It may be little that we give by our Lady ; but, in truth, if it is given without our own will, and with a disinterested charity, that little becomes very mighty to turn the wrath of God, and to attract His mercy. It would be no wonder if, at the hour of death, it should be found that a person faithful to this practice shall, by the means of it, have delivered many souls from Purgatory, and converted many sinners, though he shall have done nothing more than the ordinary actions of his state of life. What joy at his judgment ! What glory in his eternity !

Eighth Motive. Lastly, that which in some sense most persuasively engages us to this devotion to our Lady is that it is an admirable means of persevering and being faithful in virtue. Whence comes it that the majority of the conversions of sinners are not durable ? Whence comes it that we relapse so easily into sin ? Whence comes it that the greater part of the just, instead of advancing from virtue to virtue and acquiring new graces, often lose the little virtue and the little grace they have ? This mis-

fortune comes, as I have shown before, from the fact that man is at once so corrupt, so feeble, and so Inconstant, and yet trusts to himself, leans on his own strength, and believes himself capable of guarding the treasure of his graces, of his virtues and merits. On the other hand, by this devotion we confide all we possess to the Blessed Virgin, who is faithful; we take her for the universal depositary of all our goods of nature and of grace. It is to her fidelity that we trust them. It is on her power that we lean. It is on her mercy and charity that we build, in order that she may preserve and augment our virtues and merits, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, who put forth all their efforts to take them from us. We say to her, as a good child to his mother, and a faithful servant to her mistress, *Depositum custodi*—"My good Mother and Mistress, I acknowledge that up to this time I have, by your intercession, received more grace from God than I deserve; and my sad experience teaches me that I carry this treasure in a very frail vessel, and that I am too weak and too miserable to keep it safely of myself. I beseech you, therefore, receive in trust all which I possess, and keep it for me by your

fidelity and power. If you keep it for me I shall lose nothing ; if you hold me up, I shall not fall ; if you protect me, I shall be sheltered from my enemies." Listen to what St. Bernard said in former times, in order to encourage us to adopt this practice : "When Mary holds you up, you will not fall ; when she protects you, you need not fear ; when she leads you, you will not tire yourself : when she is favourable to you, you will arrive at the harbour of safety"—*Ipsa tenente, non corrui ; ipsa propitia, pervenis*. St. Bonaventure seems to say the same thing in still more formal terms. "The Blessed Virgin," he says, "is not only retained in the plenitude of the Saints, but she also retains and keeps the Saints in their plenitude, so that it may not diminish. She hinders their virtues from being dissipated, their merits from withering, their graces from being lost, the devils from hurting them, and even our Lord from punishing them when they sin"—*Virgo non solum in plenitudine sanctorum detinetur, sed etiam in plenitudine sanctos detinet, ne plenitudo minuatur ; detinet virtutes, ne fugiant ; detinet merita, ne pereant ; detinet gratias, ne effluant ; deti-*

net dæmones, ne noceant ; detinet Filium, ne peccatores percutiat (St. Bonav.. *In Specul. B. V.*).

Our Blessed Lady is the faithful Virgin, who by her fidelity to God repairs the losses which the faithless Eve has caused by her infidelity. It is she who obtains the graces of fidelity and perseverance for those who attach themselves to her. It is on this account that a Saint compares her to a firm anchor, which holds them fast and hinders their making shipwreck in the agitated sea of this world, where so many persons perish simply through not being fastened to that anchor. "We fasten our souls," says he, "to thy hope, as to an abiding anchor"—*Animas ad spem tuam sicut ad firmam ancoram alligamus*. It is to her that the Saints who have saved themselves have been the most attached, and have done their best to attach others, in order to persevere in virtue. Happy, then, a thousand times happy, are the Christians who are now fastened faithfully and entirely to her, as to a firm anchor! The violence of the storms of this world will not make them founder, nor sink their heavenly treasures. Happy those who enter into

Mary, as into the ark of Noe ! The waters of the deluge of sin, which drowns so great a portion of the world, shall do no harm to them. *Qui operantur in me non peccabunt*—“They who work in me shall not sin,” says Mary, with the Divine Wisdom. Blessed are the faithless children of the unhappy Eve, if only they attach themselves to the faithful Mother and Virgin, who remains always faithful and never belies herself—*Fidelis permanet, seipsam negare non potest* ! She always loves those who love her—*Ego diligentes me diligo*—not only with an affective love, but with an effectual and efficacious one, by hindering them, through a great abundance of graces, from drawing back in the pursuit of virtue, from falling in the road, and from losing the grace of her Son. This good Mother always out of pure charity, receives whatever we deposit with her ; and what she has once received in her office of depositary, she is obliged by justice, in virtue of the contract of trusteeship, to keep safely for us : just as a person with whom I have left a thousand pounds in trust would be under the obligation of keeping them safely for me ; so that if, by his negligence, they were lost, he

would in justice be responsible to me for them. But the faithful Mary cannot let anything which has been intrusted to her be lost through her negligence. Heaven and earth could pass away sooner than she could be negligent or faithless to those who trust in her.

Poor children of Mary, your weakness is extreme, your inconstancy is great, your inward nature is thoroughly corrupted. you are drawn (I grant it) from the same corrupt mass as all the children of Adam and Eve. Yet do not be discouraged on that account. Console yourselves, and exult in having the secret which I teach you—a secret unknown to almost all Christians, even the most devout. Leave not your gold and silver in your coffers, which have been already broken open by the evil spirits, who have robbed you. Those coffers are too little, too weak, too old, to hold a treasure so precious and so great. Put not the pure and clear water of the fountain into your vessels, all spoilt and infected by sin. If the sin is there no longer, at least the odour of it is, and so the water will be spoilt. Put not your exquisite wines into your old casks, which have had bad wine in them; else even these wines will be spoilt.

and perhaps break the casks, and be spilled upon the ground.

Though you, predestinate souls, understand me well enough, I will speak yet more openly. Trust not the gold of your charity, the silver of your purity, the waters of your heavenly graces, nor the wines of your merits and virtues to a torn sack, an old and broken coffer, a spoilt and corrupted vessel, like yourselves; else you will be stripped by the robbers—that is to say the demons—who are seeking and watching night and day for the right time to do it; and you will infect, by your own bad odour of self-love, self-confidence, and self-will, every most pure thing which God has given you. Pour, pour into the bosom and the heart of Mary all your treasures, all your graces, all your virtues. She is a spiritual vessel, she is a vessel of honour, she is a marvellous vessel of devotion—*Vas spirituale, vas honorabile, vas insigne devotionis.*

Since God Himself has been shut up in person, with all His perfections, in that vessel, it has become altogether spiritual and the spiritual abode of the most spir-

itual souls. It has become honourable, and the throne of honour for the grandest princes of eternity. It has become wonderful in devotion, and a dwelling the most illustrious for sweetnesses, for graces, and for virtues. It has become rich as a house of gold, strong as a tower of David, and pure as a tower of ivory. Oh, how happy is the man who has given everything to Mary, and has trusted himself to Mary in everything and for everything! He belongs all to Mary, and Mary belongs all to him. He can say boldly with David, *Hæc facta est mihi*—"Mary is made for me;" or with the beloved disciple, *Accepi eam in mea*—"I have taken her for all my goods:" or with Jesus Christ, *Omnia mea tua sunt, et omnia tua mea sunt*—"All that I have is thine, and all that thou hast is mine."

If any critic who reads this shall take it into his head that I speak here exaggeratedly, and with an extravagance of devotion, alas! he does not understand me, either because he is a carnal man, who has no relish for spiritual things: or because he is a worldling, who cannot receive the Holy Ghost; or because he is proud and critical, condemning and despising whatever he

does not understand himself. But the souls which are not born of blood, nor of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God and Mary understand me and relish me : and it is for these that I write. Nevertheless, I say now both for the one and for the other, in returning from this digression, that the divine Mary, being the most gracious and liberal of all pure creatures, never lets herself be overcome in love and liberality. As a holy man said of her, For an egg she gives an ox ; that is to say, for a little that is given to her, she gives much of what she has received from God. Hence, if a soul gives itself to her without reserve, she gives herself to that soul without reserve, if only we put our confidence in her without presumption, and labour on our side to acquire virtues, and to bridle our passions.

Let, then, the faithful servants of the Blessed Virgin say hardily with St. Damascene, " Having confidence in you, O Mother of God, I shall be saved ; being under your protection, I shall fear nothing ; with your succour, I shall give battle to my enemies and put them to flight ; for devotion to you is an arm of Salvation, which God gives to those whom it is His will to save"—

Spem tuam habens O Deipara servabor ; defensionem tuam possidens, non timebo ; persequar inimicos meos et in fugam vertam, habens protectionem et auxilium tuum ; nam tibi devotum esse est arma quædam salutis qua Deus his dat quos vult salvos fieri (Joan. Damasc.).

Of all the truths which I have been putting forward with regard to our Blessed Lady and her children and servants, the Holy Ghost gives us an admirable figure in the Scriptures. It is in the history of Jacob, who received the benediction of his father, Isaac, by the skill and pains of Rebecca, his mother. This is the history as the Holy Ghost relates it. I will afterwards add the explanation of it.

Esau having sold Jacob his birthright, Rebecca, the mother of the two brothers, who loved Jacob tenderly, secured this advantage to him many years afterwards by an address most holy but most full of mystery. Isaac, feeling himself very old, and wishing to bless his children before he died, called his son Esau, who was his favourite, and commanded him to go out hunting, to get him something to eat, in order that he might bless him afterwards. Rebecca

promptly informed Jacob of what had passed, and ordered him to go and take two kids from the flock. When he had given them to his mother, she prepared for Isaac what she knew he liked. She clothed Jacob in the garments of Esau, which she kept, and covered his hands and his neck with the skin of the kids, so that his father, who was blind, might in hearing Jacob's voice, think at least by the skin of his hands that it was Esau his brother. Isaac having been surprised by the voice, which he thought was Jacob's voice, made him come near him. Having touched the skins with which his hands were covered, he said that the voice truly was the voice of Jacob, but that the hands were the hands of Esau. After he had eaten, and, in kissing Jacob, had smelt the odour of his perfumed garments, he blessed him, and wished for him the dew of heaven and the fruitfulness of earth. He made him lord over all his brethren, and finished his blessing with these words, "Cursed he that curseth thee, and let him that blesseth thee be filled with blessings." Isaac had hardly finished these words when Esau entered, and brought with him what he had cap-

tured while out hunting, in order that his father might eat it, and then bless him. The holy patriarch was surprised with an incredible astonishment when he understood what had happened. But, far from retracting what he had done, on the contrary he confirmed it, for he saw too plainly that the finger of God was in the matter. Esau then uttered great cries, as the holy Scripture remarks, and, loudly accusing the deceitfulness of his brother, he asked his father if he had but one benediction ; being in this point, as the holy Fathers remark, the image of those who are too glad to ally God with the world, and are fain to enjoy the consolations of heaven and the consolations of earth both together. At last Isaac, touched with the cries of Esau, blessed him, but with a blessing of the earth, subjecting him to his brother. This made him conceive such an envenomed hatred to Jacob, that he waited only for his father's death in order to kill him. Neither would Jacob have escaped death, if his dear mother Rebecca had not saved him from it by her industries, and by the good counsels which she gave him, and which he followed.

Before explaining this beautiful history,

we must observe that, according to the holy Fathers and the interpreters of Scripture, Jacob is the figure of Jesus Christ and the predestinate, and Esau that of the reprobate. We have but got to examine the actions and conduct of the one and the other to form our judgment about this.

1. Esau, the elder, was strong and robust of body, adroit and skilful in drawing the bow, and in taking much game in the chase. 2. He hardly ever stayed in the house ; and putting no confidence in anything but his own strength and address, he only worked out of doors. 3. He took very little pains to please his mother Rebecca, and indeed did nothing for that end. 4. He was such a glutton, and loved eating so much, that he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. 5. He was, like Cain, full of envy against his brother Jacob, and persecuted him beyond measure.

Now this is the daily conduct of the reprobate. 1. They trust in their own strength and aptitude for temporal affairs. They are very strong, very able, and very enlightened in earthly business ; but very weak and very ignorant in heavenly things —*In terrenis fortes in caelestibus debiles.* 2.

It is on this account that they are hardly at all, or at least very little, at their own homes—that is to say, in their own interior, which is the inward and essential house which God has given to every man, to live there after His example; for God always rests in Himself. The reprobate do not love retirement, nor spirituality, nor inward devotion; and they treat as little, or as bigots, or as savages, those who are interior or retired from the world, and who work more within than without. 3. The reprobate care next to nothing for devotion to our Blessed Lady, the Mother of the predestinate. It is true that they do not hate her formally. Indeed, they sometimes praise her, and say they love her, and even practise some devotion in her honour. Nevertheless, they cannot bear that we should love her tenderly, because they have not the tendernesses of Jacob for her. They find much to say against the practices of devotion, in which her good children and servants faithfully employ themselves in order to gain her affection, because they do not think that devotion necessary to salvation; and they consider that, provided they do not hate our Lady formally, or openly despise her devotion,

it is enough. Moreover, they imagine that they are already in her good graces, and that, in fine, they are her servants, inasmuch as they recite and mumble certain prayers in her honour, without tenderness for her, or amendment in themselves. 4. The reprobate sell their birthright; that is to say, the pleasures of paradise. They sell it for a pottage of lentils; that is to say, for the pleasures of the earth. They laugh, they drink, they eat, they amuse themselves, they gamble, they dance, and take no more pains than Esau did to render themselves worthy of the benediction of their Heavenly Father. In a word, they think only of earth, and they love earth only; and they speak and act only for earth and for its pleasures, selling for one moment of enjoyment, for one vain puff of honour, and for a morsel of hard metal, yellow or white, their baptismal grace, their robe of innocence, and their heavenly inheritance. 5. Finally, the reprobate daily hate and persecute the predestinate openly and secretly. They feel the predestinate as a burden to them, they despise them, they criticise them, they counterwork them, they abuse them, they rob them, they cheat them, they im-

poverish them, they drive them away, they bring them low into the dust; while they themselves are making fortunes, are taking their pleasures, getting themselves into good positions, enriching themselves, aggrandising themselves, and living at their ease.

As to Jacob, the younger: 1. He was of a feeble constitution, meek and peaceful. He lived for the most part at home, in order to gain the good graces of his mother Rebecca, whom he loved tenderly. If he went abroad, it was not of his own will, nor through any confidence in his own industry, but to obey his mother.

2. He loved and honoured his mother. It was on this account that he kept at home. He avoided everything which could displease her, and did everything which he thought would please her; and this increased the love which Rebecca already had for him.

3. He was subject in all things to his dear mother. He obeyed her entirely in all matters—promptly, without delaying, and lovingly, without complaining. At the least token of her will, the little Jacob ran and worked; and he believed everything she

said to him. For example : when she told him to fetch two kids, and that he should fetch them in order that she should prepare something for his father Isaac to eat, Jacob did not reply that one was enough to make a dish for a single man, but without reasoning he did what she told him to do.

4. He had a great confidence in his dear mother. As he did not lean in the least on his own ability, he leant exclusively on the care and protection of his mother. He appealed to her in all his necessities, and consulted her in all his doubts. For example : when he asked if, instead of a blessing, he should not receive a curse from his father, he believed her and trusted her when she said that she would take the curse upon herself.

5. Lastly, he imitated as far as he could the virtues he saw in his mother. It seems as if one of his reasons for leading such a sedentary life at home was to imitate his dear mother, who was virtuous, and kept herself removed from bad companies, which corrupt the morals. By this means he made himself worthy to receive the double benediction of his beloved father.

Such also is the conduct which the predestinate daily observe.

1. They are sedentary, and home-keepers, with their Mother. In other words, they love retirement, and are interior. They give themselves to prayer; but it is after the example and in the company of their Mother the holy Virgin, the whole of whose glory is within, and who, during her whole life, so much loved retirement and prayer. It is true that they sometimes appear without, in the world; but it is in obedience to the will of God, and that of their dear Mother, to fulfil the duties of their state. However apparently important their outward works may be, they esteem still more highly those which they do within themselves, in their interior, in the company of the Blessed Virgin. For it is within that they accomplish the great work of their perfection, compared with which all their other works are but infant sports. It is on this account that, while sometimes their brothers and sisters are working outwardly with much energy, success, and skill, in the praise and with the approbation of the world, they, on the contrary, know by the light of the Holy Ghost that there is far more glory, more good, and more pleasure, in remaining hidden in retreat with Jesus Christ their

Model, in an entire and perfect subjection to their Mother, than to do of themselves wonders of nature and grace in the world as so many Esaus and reprobates do. *Gloria et divitiæ in domo ejus*—"Glory for God and riches for men are to be found in the house of Mary."

Lord Jesus, how sweet are Thy tabernacles! The sparrow has found a house to lodge in, and the turtle-dove a nest for her little ones. Oh, happy is the man who dwells in the house of Mary, where Thou wert the first to make Thy dwelling! It is in this house of the predestinate that he receives succour from Thee alone, and that he has disposed the steps and ascents of all the virtues, to raise himself in his heart to perfection in this vale of tears *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua!*—"How lovely are Thy tabernacles!"

2. The predestinate tenderly love and truly honour our Blessed Lady as their good Mother and Mistress. They love her not only by mouth, but in truth. They honour her not only outwardly, but in the bottom of their hearts. They avoid, like Jacob, everything which can displease her; and

they practise with fervour whatever they think will make them find favour with her. They bring to her, and give her, not two kids, as Jacob did to Rebecca, but their body and their soul, with all that depends on them, figured by the two kids of Jacob. They bring them to her—(1) that she may receive them as things which belong to her; (2) that she may kill them, and make them die to sin and self, in stripping them of their own skin, and their own self-love, and by this means to please Jesus her Son, who wills not to have any for His disciples and friends but those who are dead to themselves; (3) that she may prepare them for the taste of our Heavenly Father, and for His greatest glory, which she knows better than any other creature; and (4) that by her cares and intercessions this body and soul, thoroughly purified from every stain, thoroughly dead, thoroughly stripped, and well prepared, may be a delicate meat, worthy of the mouth and the blessing of our Heavenly Father. Is not this what the predestinate do, who relish and practise the perfect consecration to Jesus Christ by the hands of Mary, which we are now teaching them, by way of, tes-

tifying to Jesus and Mary an effective and courageous love ?

The reprobate tell us loudly enough that they love Jesus, and that they love and honour Mary ; but it is not with their substance, it is not up to the point of sacrificing to them their body with its senses, their soul with its passions, as the predestinate do. These last are subject and obedient to our Blessed Lady, as to their good Mother ; after the example of Jesus Christ, who, of the three-and-thirty years. He lived on earth, employed thirty to glorify God His Father, by a perfect and entire subjection to His holy Mother.

3. The predestinate obey Mary in following exactly her counsels, as the little Jacob did those of Rebecca, who said to him, *Acquiesce consiliis meis*—" My son, follow my counsels ;" or like the people at the marriage of Cana, to whom our Lady said, *Quodcumque dixerit vobis, facite*—" Whatever my Son shall say to you, that do." Jacob, for having obeyed his mother, received the blessing, as it were, miraculously, although naturally he would not have had it. The people at the marriage of Cana, for having followed our Lady's counsel, were

honoured with our Lord's first miracle, who there changed the water into wine at the prayer of His holy Mother. In like manner, all those who, to the end of time, shall receive the benediction of our Heavenly Father, and shall be honoured by the wonders of God, shall only receive their graces in consequence of their perfect obedience to Mary. The Esaus, on the contrary, lose their blessing through their want of subjection to the Blessed Virgin.

4. The predestinate have also a great confidence in the goodness and power of our Blessed Lady, their good Mother. They call incessantly for her help. They look upon her as their polar star, to lead them to a good port. They lay bare to her their pains and their necessities with much openness of heart. They attach themselves to her mercy and her sweetness, in order to get the pardon of their sins by her intercession, or to taste her maternal sweetnesses in their pains and wearinesses.

They even throw themselves, hide themselves, and lose themselves in an admirable manner in her loving and virginal bosom, that they may be set on fire there of pure love, that they may be cleansed there from

their least stain, and fully to find Jesus, who dwells there, as on His most glorious throne. Oh, what happiness! "Think not," says the Abbot Gueric, "that it is happier to dwell in Abraham's bosom than in Mary's; for it is in this last that our Lord has placed His throne"—*Ne credideris majoris esse felicitatis habitare in sinu Abraham quam in sinu Mariæ, cum in eo Dominus posuerit thronum suum.*

The reprobate on the contrary, putting all their trust in themselves, only eat with the prodigal what the swine eat. They eat earth like the toads, and, like the children of the world, they love only visible and external things. They have no relish for the sweetnesses of Mary's bosom. They have not that feeling of a certain resting-place, and a sure confidence, which the predestinate feel in the holy Virgin, their good Mother. They are miserably attached to their outward hunger, as St. Gregory says, and make not so much as a pretence of having any taste for the sweetness which is prepared within themselves, and within Jesus and Mary.

5. Lastly. the predestinate keep the ways of our Blessed Lady, their good Moth-

er : that is to say, they imitate her. It is on this point that they are truly happy and truly devout, and carry more especially the mark of their predestination. This good Mother says to them, *Beati qui custodiunt vias meas* ; that is to say, " Blessed are they who practise my virtues, and with the help of divine grace walk in the footsteps of my life. During life they are happy in this world, through the abundance of graces and sweetnesses which I impart to them from my fulness, and more abundantly than to others, who do not imitate me so closely. They are happy in their death, which is mild and tranquil, and at which I am ordinarily present myself, that I myself may conduct them to the joys of eternity ; and, lastly, they shall be happy in eternity ; for never has any one of my good servants been lost who imitated my virtues during life."

The reprobate, on the contrary, are unhappy during their life, at their death, and for eternity, because they do not imitate our Lady in her virtues, but content themselves with sometimes being enrolled in her confraternities, reciting some prayers in her honour, or going through some other

exterior devotion. O holy Virgin, my good Mother, how happy are those (I repeat it with the transports of my heart)—how happy are those who, not letting themselves be seduced by a false devotion towards you, faithfully keep your ways, your counsels, and your orders! But how unhappy and accursed are those who abuse your devotion, and keep not the commandments of your Son: *Maledicti omnes qui declinant a mandatis tuis!*—"Cursed are all who fall from Thy commandments!"

Let us now turn to look at the charitable duties which our Blessed Lady, as the best of all Mothers, fulfils for the faithful servants who have given themselves to her after the manner I have described, and according to the figure of Jacob.

I. She loves them: *Ego diligentes me diligo*—"I love those who love me." She loves them (1) because she is their true Mother; and a mother loves her child, the fruit of her entrails; (2) she loves them out of gratitude, because they effectively love her as their good Mother: (3) she loves them because, being predestinate, God loves them—*Jacob dilexi, Esau autem odio habui*; (4) she loves them because they

are all consecrated to her and are her possession and her inheritance—*In Israel hæreditare.*

She loves them tenderly, and more tenderly than all other mothers put together. Throw, if you can, all the natural love which all the mothers of the world have for their children into the one heart of one mother for one only child. Surely that mother will love that child immensely. Nevertheless, it is true that Mary loves her children yet more tenderly than that mother would love that child of hers.

She does not love them only with affection, but with efficacy. Her love for them is active and effective, equal to that of Rebecca for Jacob, and far beyond it.

See what this good Mother, of whom Rebecca was but the type, does to obtain for her children the blessing of our Heavenly Father.

1. She is on the look-out, as Rebecca was, for favourable occasions to do them good, to aggrandise and enrich them. She sees clearly in God all goods and evils, all prosperous and adverse fortunes, the blessings and the cursings of God ; and then she so

disposes things from afar, that she may exempt her servants from all sorts of evils, and heap upon them all sorts of goods ; so that if there is a good fortune to make in God by the fidelity of a creature to any high employment, it is certain that Mary will procure that good fortune for some of her true children and servants, and will give them the grace to go through it with fidelity. It is a Saint who says, *Ipsa procurat negotia nostra.*

2. She also gives her clients good counsels, as Rebecca did to Jacob, *Fili mi, acquiesce consiliis meis*—"My son, follow my counsels." Among other counsels, she inspires them to bring her the two kids ; that is to say, their body and soul, in order to consecrate them, to make a pottage agreeable to God, and to do everything which Jesus Christ her Son has taught by His words and His examples. If it is not by herself that she gives these counsels, it is by the ministry of the Angels, who have no greater honour or pleasure than to descend to earth to obey any of her commandments, and to succour any of her servants.

3. When they have brought to her and consecrated to her their body and soul, and

all that depends on them, without excepting anything, what does that good Mother do? Just what Rebecca did of old with the two kids Jacob brought her. (1) She kills them, and makes them die to the old Adam. (2) She flays, and strips them of their natural skin, their natural inclinations, self-love, their own will, and all attachment to creatures. (3) She cleanses them of their spots, their vilenesses, and their sins. (4) She dresses them to the taste of God, and to His greatest glory; and as it is Mary alone who knows perfectly what that divine taste is, and what that greatest glory of the Most High, it is Mary alone who, without making any mistake, can accommodate and dress our body and soul for that taste infinitely exalted, and for that glory infinitely hidden.

4. This good Mother, having received the perfect offering which we make to her of ourselves, our own merits and satisfactions, by the devotion I am describing, strips us of our old garments; she makes us her own and so makes us worthy to appear before our Heavenly Father.

(1) She clothes us in the clean, new, precious, and perfumed garments of Esau

the elder—that is, of Jesus Christ her Son—whom she keeps in her house—that is to say, whom she has in her own power. She is the treasurer and eternal dispenser of the merits and virtues of her Son, which she gives and communicates to whom she wills, when she wills, as she wills, and in such quantity as she wills; as we have seen before.

(2) She covers the neck and hands of her servants with the skins of the kids she killed; that is to say, she adorns them with the merits and value of her own proper actions. She kills and mortifies, it is true, all that is impure and imperfect in them, but she neither loses nor dissipates one atom of the good which grace has done there. On the contrary, she preserves and augments it, to make it the ornament and the strength of their neck and their hands; that is to say, to fortify them, and to help them to carry the yoke of the Lord, which is worn upon the neck, and to work great things for the glory of God, and the salvation of their poor brethren.

(3) She bestows a new perfume and a new grace upon their garments and adornments, in communicating to them her own

garments, merits, and virtues, which she bequeathed to them by her testament, when she died; as said a holy religious of the last century, who died in the odour of sanctity, and learnt this by revelation. Thus all her domestics, faithful servants, and slaves, are doubly clad in the garments of her Son and in her own: *Omnes domestici restiti sunt duplicibus*—"All her domestics are clothed in double clothing." It is on this account that they have nothing to fear from the cold of Jesus Christ, who is white as snow—a cold which the reprobate, all naked, and stripped of the merits of Jesus and Mary, cannot for one moment bear.

(4) Finally, she enables them to obtain the blessing of our Heavenly Father, though, being but the youngest born and indeed only adopted children, they have no natural right to have it. With these garments all new, most precious, and of most fragrant odour, and with their body and soul well prepared and dressed, they draw near with confidence to the Father's bed of repose. He understands and distinguishes their voice, which is the voice of the sinner; He touches their hands, cov-

ered with skins ; He smells the good odour of their clothes ; He eats with joy of that which Mary their Mother has dressed for Him recognising in them the merits and the good odour of His Son and of His holy Mother. 1. First, then, He gives them His double benediction, the benediction of the dew of heaven. *De rore cœlestis*—that is to say, of divine grace, which is the seed of glory ; *Benedixit nos in omni benedictione spiritali in Christo Jesu* ; and then the benediction of the fat of the earth, *De pinguedine terræ*—that is to say, the Father gives them their daily bread, and a sufficient abundance of the goods of this world. 2. Secondly, He makes them masters of their other brethren, the reprobate. But this primacy is not always apparent in the world which passes in an instant, and where the reprobate are often masters—*Peccatores effabuntur et gloriabuntur ; vidi impium superexaltatum et elevatum*. But it is nevertheless a true primacy ; and it will appear manifestly in the other world for all eternity, where the just, as the Holy Ghost says, shall reign over the nations, and command them—*Dominabuntur populis*. 3. Thirdly, His Majesty, not con-

tent with blessing them in their persons and their goods, blesses also those who shall bless them, and curses those who shall curse and persecute them.

III. The second duty which our Blessed Lady fulfils towards her faithful servants is that she furnishes them with everything, both for their body and their soul. She gives them double clothing, as we have just seen. She gives them to eat the most exquisite meats of the table of God ; for she gives them to eat the bread of life, which she herself has formed. *A generationibus meis implemini*—My dear children, she says, under the name of divine Wisdom, be filled with my generations ; that is to say, with Jesus, the fruit of life, whom I have brought into the world for you. *Venite, comedite panem meum et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis ; comedite, et bibite, et inebriamini, carissimi*—Come, she repeats to them in another place, eat my bread, which is Jesus, and drink the wine of His love, which I have mixed for you. As it is Mary who is the treasurer and dispenser of the gifts and graces of the Most High, she gives a good portion, and indeed the best portion, to nourish and maintain her child-

ren and her servants. They are fattened on the Living Bread. They are inebriated on the wine which brings forth virgins. They are borne at the bosom of Mary—*Ab ubera portabimini*. They have such facility in carrying the yoke of Jesus Christ, that they feel nothing of its weight, because of the oil of devotion which has made it soften and decay—*Jugum eorum putrescere faciet a facie olei*.

III. The third good which our Lady does to her servants is that she conducts and directs them according to the will of her Son. Rebecca guided her little Jacob, and gave him good advice from time to time; either to draw upon himself the blessing of his father, or to avert from himself the hatred and persecution of his brother Esau. Mary who is the Star of the Sea, leads all her faithful servants to a good port. She shows them the paths of eternal life. She makes them avoid the dangerous places. She conducts them by her hand along the paths of justice. She steadies them when they are about to fall; she lifts them up when they have fallen. She reproveth them like a charitable mother when they fail; and sometimes she even lovingly chastises

them. Can a child obedient to Mary, his foster-mother and his enlightened guide, go astray in the paths of eternity? *Ipsam sequens non devias*—"If you follow her," says St. Bernard, "you cannot wander from the road." Fear not, therefore, that a true child of Mary can be deceived by the evil one, or fall into any formal heresy. There where the guidance of Mary is, neither the evil spirit with his illusions, nor the heretics with their subtleties, can ever come—*Ipsâ tenente, non corruiis*.

IV. The fourth good office which our Lady renders to her children and faithful servants is to protect and defend them. Rebecca, by her cares and artifices, delivered Jacob from all the dangers in which he found himself, and particularly from the death which his brother Esau would have inflicted on him, because of the envy and hatred which he bore him; as Cain did of old to his brother Abel. Mary, the good Mother of the predestinate, hides them under the wings of her protection, as a hen hides her chickens. She speaks, she humbles herself, she condescends to all their weaknesses, to secure them from the hawk and the vulture. She puts herself

round about them, and she accompanies them, like an army in battle array, *ut castrorum acies ordinata*. Shall a man, who has an army of a hundred thousand soldiers around him, fear his enemies? A faithful servant of Mary, surrounded by her protection and her imperial power, has still less to fear. This good Mother and powerful Princess of the heavens would rather despatch battalions of millions of Angels to succour one of her servants than that it should ever be said that a faithful servant of Mary, who trusted in her, had had to succumb to the malle, the number, and the vehemence of his enemies.

V. Lastly, the fifth and the greatest good which the sweet Mary procures for her faithful clients is to intercede for them with her Son, and to appease Him by her prayers. She unites them to Him with a most intimate union, and she keeps them unshaken in that union.

Rebecca made Jacob come near to his father's bed. The good man touched him, embraced him, and even kissed him with joy, being content and satisfied with the well-dressed viands which he had brought

him ; and having smelt with much contentment the exquisite perfume of his garments, he cried out, *Ecce odor filii mei sicut odor agri pleni, cui benedixit Dominus* "Behold the odour of my son, which is like the odour of a full field that the Lord hath blest." This odour of the full field which charms the heart of the Father is nothing else than the odour of the virtues and merits of Mary, who is a field full of grace, where God the Father has sown His only Son, as a grain of the wheat of the elect. Oh, how a child perfumed with the good odour of Mary, is welcome with Jesus Christ, who is the Father of the world to come ! Oh, how promptly and how perfectly is such a child united to his Lord ! But we have shown this at length already.

Furthermore, after Mary has heaped her favours upon her children and faithful servants, and has obtained for them the benediction of her Heavenly Father and union with Jesus Christ, she preserves them in Jesus, and Jesus in them. She takes care of them, watches over them always, for fear they should lose the grace of God, and fall back into the snares of their enemies. *In plenitudine detinet*—she detains the Saints

in their fulness, and makes them persevere to the end, as we have seen.

This is the interpretation of (the history of Jacob and Esau) that great and ancient figure of predestination and reprobation, so unknown, and so full of mysteries.

III. THE WONDERFUL EFFECTS WHICH THIS DEVOTION PRODUCES IN THE SOUL WHICH IS FAITHFUL TO IT.

My dear brother, be sure that, if you are faithful to the interior and exterior practices of this devotion, which I will point out, the following effects will take place in your soul :

1. By the light which the Holy Ghost will give you by His dear Spouse, Mary, you will understand your own evil, your corruption and your incapacity for anything good, which is not God's free gift to us, either as Author of nature or of grace. In consequence of this knowledge you will despise yourself. You will only think of yourself with horror. You will regard yourself as a snail, that spoils everything with its slime ; or a toad, that poisons everything with its venom ; or as a spiteful serpent,

only seeking to deceive. In other words, the humble Mary will communicate to you a portion of her profound humility, which will make you despise yourself, despise nobody else, but love to be despised yourself.

2. Our Blessed Lady will give you also a portion of her faith, which was the greatest of all faiths that ever were on earth, greater than the faith of all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints put together. Now that she is reigning in the heavens, she has no longer this faith, because she sees all things clearly in God by the light of glory. Nevertheless, with the consent of the Most High, in entering into glory she has not lost her faith. She has kept it, in order that she may keep it in the Church Militant for her faithful servants. The more, then, you gain the favour of that august Princess and faithful Virgin, the more will you go by pure faith in all your conduct; a pure faith which will make you hardly care at all about the sensible and the extraordinary; a lively faith animated by charity, which will enable you to perform all your actions from the motive of pure love; a faith firm and immov-

able as a rock, through which you will rest quiet and constant in the midst of storms and hurricanes; a faith active and piercing, which, like a mysterious pass-key, will give you entrance into all the mysteries of Jesus, into the Last Ends of man, and into the Heart of God Himself; a courageous faith, which will enable you to undertake and carry out without hesitation great things for God and for the salvation of souls; lastly, a faith which will be your blazing torch, your divine life, your hidden treasure of divine wisdom, and your omnipotent arm, which you will use to enlighten those who are in the darkness of the shadow of death, to inflame those who are lukewarm and who have need of the heated gold of charity, to give life to those who are dead in sin, to teach and overthrow, by your meek and powerful words, the hearts of marble and the cedars of Lebanon, and finally, to resist the devil and all the enemies of salvation.

3. This Mother of fair love will take away from your heart all scruple and all disorder of servile fear. She will open and enlarge it to run the way of her Son's commandments with the holy liberty of the

children of God. She will introduce into it pure love, of which she has the treasure ; so that you shall no longer be guided by fear, as hitherto, in your dealings with the God of charity, but by pure love. You will look on Him as your good Fāther, whom you will be incessantly trying to please, and with whom you will converse confidently, as a child with its tender father. If, unfortunately, you offend Him, you will at once humble yourself before Him. You will ask His pardon with great lowliness, but at the same time you will stretch your hand out to Him with simplicity, and you will raise yourself up lovingly, without trouble or disquietude, and go on your way to Him without discouragement.

4. Our Blessed Lady will fill you with a great confidence in God and in herself : (1) because you will not be approaching to Jesus by yourself, but always by that good Mother ; (2) because, as you have given her all your merits, graces, and satisfactions, to dispose of at her will, she will communicate to you her virtues, and will clothe you in her merits, so that you will be able to say to God with confidence, " Behold Mary Thy handmaid ; be it done unto me accord-

ing to Thy word"—*Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*; (3) because, as you have given yourself entirely to her, body and soul, she, who is liberal with the liberal, and more liberal even than the liberal, will in return give herself to you in a marvellous but real manner, so that you may say to her with assurance, *Tuus sum ego salvum me fac*—"I am thine, holy Virgin; save me:" or, as I have said before, with the Beloved Disciple, *Accipi te in mea*—"I have taken thee, holy Mother, for all my goods." You may also say with St. Bonaventure, *Ecce, Domina, salvatrix mea fiducialiter agam et non timebo, quia fortitudo mea, et laus mea in Domino es tu*; and in another place, *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*; *O Virgo gloriosa, super omnia benedicta, ponam te ut signaculum super cor meum, quia fortis est ut mors dilectio tua*—"My dear Mistress, who saves me, I will have confidence and will not fear, because you are my strength and my praise in the Lord.... I am altogether yours, and all that I have belongs to you! O glorious Virgin, blessed above all created things! I will put you as a seal upon my heart, because your love is as strong as death."

You may say to God in the sentiments of the prophet, *Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum, neque elati sunt oculi mei; neque ambulavi in magnis, neque in mirabilibus super me, si non humiliter sentiebam; sed exaltavi animam meam: sicut ablactatus est super matre tua, ita retributio in anima mea—*

“Lord, my heart and my eyes have no right to extol themselves, or to be proud, or to seek great and wonderful things. Yet even in this I am not humble; but I have lifted up and encouraged my soul by confidence: I am like a child, weaned from the pleasures of earth and resting on its mother's lap; and it is on that lap that all good things come to me” (see Psalm cxxx.). (4) What will still further increase your confidence in her is that you will have less confidence in yourself. You have given her in trust all you have of good about you, that she may have it and keep it; and so all the trust you once had in yourself has become an increase of confidence in her, who is your treasure. Oh, what confidence and what consolation is this for a soul who can say that the treasure of God, where He has been pleased to put all He had most precious, is his own treasure also! *Ipsa est*

thesaurus Domini. It was a Saint who said she was the treasure of the Lord.

5. The soul of our Blessed Lady will communicate itself to you, to glorify the Lord. Her spirit will enter into the place of yours, to rejoice in God her salvation, provided only that you are faithful to the practices of this devotion. *Sit in singulis anima Mariæ, ut magnificet Dominum: sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ, ut exultet in Deo* (St. Ambrose) —“Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to glorify the Lord: let the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God.” Ah! when will the happy time come said a holy man of our own days, who was all absorbed in Mary—ah! when will the happy time come, when the divine Mary will be established mistress and queen of hearts, in order that she may subject them fully to the empire of her great and holy Jesus? When will souls breathe Mary as the body breathes air? When that time comes wonderful things will happen in those lowly places where the Holy Ghost, finding His dear Spouse as it were reproduced in souls, shall come in with abundance, and fill them full to overflowing with His gifts, and particularly with the gift of wisdom, to work the miracles of grace. My dear

brother, when will that happy time, that age of Mary, come, when souls, losing themselves in the abyss of her interior, shall become living copies of Mary, to love and glorify Jesus? That time will not come until men shall know and practise this devotion which I am teaching. *Ut adveniat regnum tuum, adveniat regnum Mariæ.*

6. If Mary, who is the tree of life, is well cultivated in our soul by fidelity to the practices of this devotion, she will bear her fruit in her own time, and her fruit is none other than Jesus Christ. How many devout souls do I see who seek Jesus Christ, some by one way or by one practice, and others by other ways and other practices; and after they have toiled much throughout the night, they say, *Per totam noctem laborantes nihil cepimus*—"We have toiled all night, and have taken nothing!" We may say to them, *Laborastis multum, et intulistis parum*—"You have laboured much and gained little." Jesus is yet feeble in you. But by that immaculate way of Mary and that divine practice which I am teaching, we toil during the day; we toil in a holy place; we toil but little. There is no night in Mary, because there is no sin nor even the slight-

est shade. Mary is a holy place, and the holy of holies where Saints are formed and moulded. Take notice, if you please, that I say the Saints are moulded in Mary. There is a great difference between making a figure in relief by blows of hammer and chisel, and making a figure by throwing it into a mould. Statuaries and sculptors labour much to make figures in the first manner ; but to make them in the second manner, they work little, and do their work quickly.

St. Augustine calls our Blessed Lady *forma Dei*—"the mould of God:" *Si formam Dei te appellem, digna existis*—"The mould fit to cast and mould gods." He who is cast in this mould is presently formed and moulded in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in him. At a slight expense and in a short time he will become God, because he has been cast in the same mould which has formed a God.

It seems to me that I can very aptly compare directors and devout persons, who wish to form Jesus Christ in themselves or others by different practices from this, to sculptors who trust in their own professional skill, ingenuity or art, and so give an infinity of

hammerings and chisellings to a hard stone or a piece of badly-polished wood, to make an image of Jesus Christ out of it. Sometimes they do not succeed in giving anything like the natural expression of Jesus, either from having no knowledge or experience of the Person of Jesus, or from some blow awkwardly given, which has spoiled the work. But for those who embrace the secret of grace which I am revealing to them I may reasonably compare them to founders and casters who have discovered the beautiful mould of Mary, where Jesus was naturally and divinely formed ; and without trusting to their own skill, but only in the goodness of the mould, they cast themselves and lose themselves in Mary, to become the portraits of Jesus Christ after nature.

O beautiful and true comparison ! but who will comprehend it ? I desire that you may, my dear brother. But remember that we only cast in a mould what is melted and liquid : that is to say, you must destroy and melt down in yourself the old Adam to become the new one in Mary.

7. By this practice, faithfully observed, you will give Jesus more glory in a month than by any other practice, however diffi-

cult, in many years ; and I give the following reasons for it.

(1) Because, doing your actions by our Blessed Lady, as this practice teaches you, you abandon your own intentions and operations, although good and known, to lose yourself, so to speak, in the intentions of the Blessed Virgin, although they are unknown. Thus you enter by participation into the sublimity of her intentions, which are so pure, that she gives more glory to God by the least of her actions—for example, in twirling her distaff or pointing her needle—than St. Lawrence by his cruel martyrdom on his gridiron, or even all the Saints by all their heroic actions put together. It was thus that, during her sojourn here below, she acquired such an unspeakable aggregate of graces and merits that it were easier to count the stars of the firmament, the drops of water in the sea, or the grains of sand upon its shore, than her merits and graces. Thus it was that she gave more glory to God than all the Angels and Saints have given Him or ever will give Him. O prodigy of a Mary ! thou canst not help but do prodigies of grace in souls that wish to lose themselves altogether in thee !

(2) Because the soul in this practice

counts as nothing whatever it thinks or does of itself ! and only puts its trust and takes its pleasure in the dispositions of Mary, when it approaches Jesus or even speaks to Him. Thus it practices humility far more than the souls who act of themselves, and lean with however imperceptible a complacency on their own dispositions. But if the soul acts more humbly, it therefore glorifies God more highly ; and He is only perfectly glorified by the humble and those that are little and lowly in heart.

(3) Because our Blessed Lady, wishing by her great charity to receive the present of our actions in her virginal hands, gives them an admirable beauty and splendour. More over, she offers them herself to Jesus Christ, and without difficulty ; and our Lord is thus more glorified by them than if we offered them by our own criminal hands.

(4) Lastly, because you never think of Mary without God, in your place, thinking of God. You never praise or honour Mary without God praising and honouring God. Mary is altogether relative to God ; and, indeed, I might well call her the relation to God. She only exists with reference to God. She is the echo of God, who says noth-

ing, repeats nothing, but God. If you say "Mary," she says "God," St. Elizabeth praised Mary, and called her blessed, because she had believed. Mary, the faithful echo of God, at once intoned *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*—"My soul doth magnify the Lord." That which Mary did then, she does daily now. When we praise her, love her, honour her, or give anything to her, it is God who is praised, God who is loved, God who is glorified. We give, then, to God by Mary and in Mary.

IV. PARTICULAR PRACTICES OF THIS DEVOTION.

1. *External Practices.*

ALTHOUGH what is essential in this devotion consists in the interior, we must not fail to unite to the inward practice certain external observances. *Hæc oportet facere et illa non omittere.* We must do the one, yet not leave the other undone, both because the outward practices well performed aid the inward ones, and because they make a man remember, by reminding his senses, what he has done or ought to do ; and also

because they are suitable to edify our neighbour, who sees them, which inward practices cannot do. Let no worlding, then, or critic sneer at this. Let them not say that because true devotion is in the heart, we must avoid external devotion ; or that devotion ought to be hidden, and that there may be vanity in showing it. I answer with my Master, that men should see our good works, that they may glorify our Father, who is in heaven ; not, as St. Gregory says, that we ought to perform our actions and exterior devotions to please men and to get praise—that would be vanity—but that we should sometimes do them before men, with the view of pleasing God, and glorifying Him thereby, without caring either for the contempt or the praise of men.

I will only allude briefly to some exterior practices, which I do not call “exterior” because we do them without any interior, but because they have something outward about them, to distinguish them from those which are purely inward.

First Practice. Those who wish to enter into this particular devotion, which is not at present erected into a confraternity, though *stella*, and the litany of the Holy Ghost.

said in the first part of this preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ, employed twelve days at least in emptying themselves of the spirit of the world, which is contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ should employ three weeks in filling themselves with Jesus Christ by the holy Virgin. They should pursue the following order :

During the first week they should employ all their prayers and pious actions in asking for a knowledge of themselves, and for contrition of their sins ; and they should do this in a spirit of humility. For that end they can, if they choose, meditate on what I have said before of our inward corruption. They can look upon themselves during the six days of this week as snails, crawling things ; toads, swine, serpents, and unclean animals ; or they can reflect on those three considerations of St. Bernard : the vileness of our origin, the dishonours of our present state, and our ending as the food of worms. They should pray our Lord and the Holy Ghost to enlighten them ; and for that end they might use the ejaculations, *Domine, ut videam*, or *Noverim me*, or *Veni Sancte Spiritus* ; and they may say daily the *Ave maris stella*, and the litany of the Holy Ghost.

During the second week they should apply themselves, during all their prayers and works each day, to know the Blessed Virgin. They should ask this knowledge of the Holy Ghost: they should read and meditate what we have said about it. They should recite, as in the first week, the Litany of the Holy Ghost and the *Ave, maris stella*, and in addition a Rosary daily, or, if not a whole Rosary at least a chaplet, for the intention of impetrating more knowledge of Mary.

They should apply themselves in the third week to know Jesus Christ. They can meditate upon what we have said about Him, and say the prayer of St. Augustine, which they will find in the first part of this treatise. They can, with the same Saint repeat a hundred times a day, *Noverim te—*“Lord, that I might know Thee!” or *Domine, ut videam—*“Lord, that I might see who Thou art!” They shall recite, as in the preceding weeks, the litany of the Holy Ghost and the *Ave, maris stella*, and they shall add daily the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus. At the end of the three weeks they shall confess and communicate, with the intention of giving themselves to Jesus

Christ, in the quality of slaves of love, by the hands of Mary. After communion, which they should try to make according to the method given farther on, they should recite the formula of their consecration, which they will find afterwards. They ought to write it, or have it written, unless it is printed; and they should sign it the same day they made it. It would be well also that on that day they should pay some tribute to Jesus Christ and our Blessed Lady, either as a penance for their past unfaithfulness to the vows of their Baptism, or in testimony of their dependence and allegiance to the domain of Jesus and Mary. This tribute ought to be according to the devotion and capacity of every one, as a fast, a mortification, an alms, or a candle. If they had but a pin to give in homage, yet gave it with a good heart, it would be enough for Jesus, who looks only at the good-will. Once a year at least, on the same day, they should renew the same consecration, observing the same practices during the three weeks. They might also once a month, or even once a day, renew what they have done by these few words: *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*—
“I am all for Thee, and all I have belongs

to Thee, O my sweet Jesus, by Mary Thy holy Mother.”

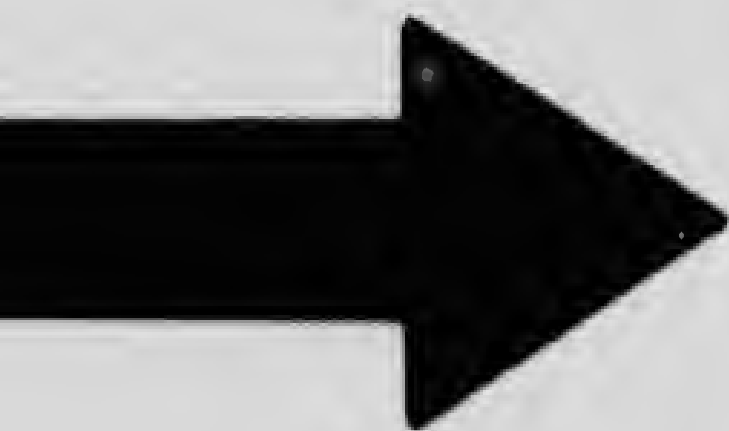
Second Practice. They may recite every day of their life, without, however, making any burden of it, the Little Corona of the Blessed Virgin, composed of three Our Fathers and twelve Hail Marys, in honour of our Lady's twelve privileges and grandeurs. This is a very ancient practice, for it has its foundation in the Holy Scriptures. St. John saw a woman crowned with twelve stars, clothed with the sun, and holding the moon under her feet; and this woman, according to the interpreters, was the most holy Virgin. There are many ways of saying this Corona well; but it would be too long to enter upon them. The Holy Ghost will teach them to those who are the most faithful to this devotion. Nevertheless, to say it quite simply we should begin by saying, *Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata, da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.* After that we should say the *Crædo*, and then a *Pater* with four *Aves*, and then one *Gloria Patri*; then another *Pater*, four *Aves*, and one *Gloria Patri*, and so on with the rest; and at the end we should say the *Sub tuum præsidium.*

Third Practice. It is a most glorious and praiseworthy thing, and very useful to those who have thus made themselves slaves of Jesus in Mary, that they should wear, as a badge of their loving slavery, little iron chains, blessed with the proper benediction.

It is perfectly true that these external badges are not essential, and a person who has embraced this devotion may very well go without them; nevertheless, I cannot refrain from warmly praising those who, after having shaken off the shameful chains of the slavery of the devil, in which original sin, and perhaps actual sins, had engaged them, have voluntarily surrendered themselves to the glorious slavery of Jesus Christ, and glory with St. Paul in being in chains for Jesus; chains a thousand times more glorious and precious, though of iron, than all the golden collars of emperors.

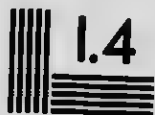
Once there was nothing more infamous on earth than the Cross, and now that wood is the most glorious boast of Christianity. Let us say the same of the irons of slavery. There was nothing more ignominious among the ancients; nothing more shameful even now among the heathen. But among Christians there is nothing more illustrious than the chains of Jesus; for





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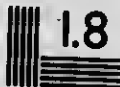
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they unchain us, and preserve us from the infamous fetters of sin and the devil. They set us at liberty, and chain us to Jesus and Mary; not by compulsion and constraint, like galley-slaves, but by charity and love, like children. *Traham eos in vinculis charitatis*—"I will draw them to Me," said God by the mouth of the prophet, "by the chains of love." These chains are as strong as death, and they are in a certain sense strongest in those who are faithful in carrying these glorious badges to their death. For, though death destroys their bodies in bringing them to corruption, it does not destroy the chains of their slavery, which, being of iron, do not corrupt so easily. Perhaps, at the day of the resurrection of the body, the grand last judgment, these chains shall still be round their bones, and shall make a part of their glory, and be transmuted into chains of light and splendour. Happy, then, a thousand times happy, the illustrious slaves of Jesus who wear their chains even to the tomb.

The following are the reasons for wearing these little chains :

First, it is to remind the Christian of the vows and engagements of his Baptism, of the perfect renewal he has made of them

by this devotion, and of the strict obligation under which he is to be faithful to them. As the man who shapes his course more often by the senses than by pure faith easily forgets his obligations towards God, unless he has some outward thing to remind him of them, these little chains serve marvellously to remind the Christian of the chains of sin, and of the slavery of the devil, from which Baptism has delivered him, and of the dependence on Jesus which he has vowed to Him in Baptism, and of the ratification of it which he has made by the renewal of his vows. One of the reasons why so few Christians think of their baptismal vows, and live with as much license as if they had promised no more to God than the heathen, is because they do not wear any external badge to make them remember it.

Secondly, it is to show that we are not ashamed of the servitude and slavery of Jesus Christ, and that we renounce the slavery of the world, sin, and the devil.

Thirdly, it is to guarantee ourselves from the chains of sin and the devil, and to be beforehand with them; for we must wear either the chains of iniquity, or the chains of charity and salvation: *Vincula peccatorum*

aut vincula charitatis. O my dear brother, let us break the chains of sin and of sinners, of the world and of worldliness, of the devil and his ministers ; and let us cast far from us their depressing yoke : *Dirumpamus vincula eorum, et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum.* Let us put our feet, to use the terms of the Holy Ghost, into His glorious irons, and our neck into His collars : *Injice pedem tuum in compedes illius, et in torques illius collum tuum ; subjice humerum tuum et porta illam, et ne acedieris vinculis ejus* You will remark that the Holy Ghost, before saying these words, prepares a soul for them, lest it should reject His important counsel. See His words : *Audi, fili, et accipe consilium intellectus, et ne abjicias consilia mea*—“Hearken, My son, and receive a counsel of understanding, and reject not My counsel.”

You would wish, my very dear friend, that I should here unite myself to the Holy Ghost to give you the same counsel with Him. *Vincula illius alligatura salutis*—His chains are chains of salvation. As Jesus Christ on the Cross ought to draw all things to Him, with their will or against it, He will draw the reprobate by the chains of

their sins, that He may chain them like galley-slaves and devils to His eternal anger and revengeful justice. But He will, and particularly in these latter times, draw the predestinate by the chains of charity. *Omnia traham ad meipsum. Traham eos in vinculis charitatis.* These loving slaves of Jesus Christ, “the chained of Christ”—*Vincti Christi*—can wear their chains either on their neck or on their feet. Father Vincent Caraffa, seventh general of the Jesuits, who died in the odour of sanctity, in the year 1643, used to wear a circle of iron round his feet as a mark of his servitude; and said that his only pain was that he could not publicly drag a chain.

The Mother Agnes of Jesus, of whom we have spoken before, used to wear an iron chain round her body. Others have worn it round their neck, in penance for the collars of pearls which they have worn in the world; while others have worn it round their arms, to remind themselves, in their manual labours, that they were slaves of Jesus Christ.

Fourth Practice. Those who undertake this holy slavery should have a very special devotion to the great mystery of the Incarna-

tion of the Word on the 25th of March. Indeed, the Incarnation is the proper mystery of this practice, inasmuch as it was a devotion inspired by the Holy Ghost, first, to honour and imitate the ineffable dependence which God the Son has been pleased to have on Mary, for His Father's glory and our salvation; which dependence particularly appears in this mystery, where Jesus is a captive and a slave in the bosom of the divine Mary, and depends upon her for all things; secondly, to thank God for the incomparable graces He has given Mary, and particularly for having chosen her to be His most holy Mother, which choice was made in this mystery. These are the two principal ends of the slavery of Jesus in Mary.

Have the goodness to observe that I generally say "the slave of Jesus in Mary," "the slave of Mary in Jesus." I might, in good truth, as many have done before, say "the slave of Mary," "the slavery of the holy Virgin;" but I think it better to say "the slave of Jesus in Mary," as M. Tronson, superior-general of the seminary of St. Sulpice, renowned for his rare prudence and consummate piety, counselled to an

ecclesiastic who consulted him on the subject. The following were the reasons :

1. As we are living in an age of intellectual pride, and there are all round us numbers of puffed-up scholars and conceited and critical spirits, who have plenty to say against the best established and most solid practices of piety, it is better for us not to give them any needless occasion of criticism. Hence it is better for us to say "the slavery of Jesus in Mary," and to call ourselves the slaves of Jesus Christ rather than the slaves of Mary, taking the denomination of our devotion rather from its last end, which is Jesus Christ, than from the road and the means to the end, which Mary is ; though I repeat that in truth we may do either, as I have done myself. For example : a man who goes from Orleans to Tours by way of Amboise may very well say that he is going to Amboise, or that he is going to Tours ; that he is a traveller to Amboise, and a traveller to Tours ; with this difference, however, that Amboise is but his straight road to Tours, and that Tours only is the last end and term of his voyage.

2. A second reason is because the princi-

pal mystery we celebrate in honour of this devotion is the mystery of the Incarnation, where we can only see Jesus in Mary, and incarnate in her bosom. Hence it is more to the purpose to speak of the slavery of Jesus in Mary, and of Jesus residing and reigning in Mary, according to that beautiful prayer of so many great men : " O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in us. in Thy spirit of sanctity." etc.

3. Another reason is because this manner of speaking sets forth still more the intimate union which there is between Jesus and Mary. They are so intimately united, that the one is altogether in the other. Jesus is altogether in Mary, and Mary is altogether in Jesus ; or rather, she exists no more, but Jesus is all alone in her, and it were easier to separate the light from the sun than Mary from Jesus. So that we might call our Lord *Jesus of Mary*, and our Blessed Lady *Mary of Jesus*.

Time would not permit me to stop now to explain the excellences and grandeurs of the mysteries of Jesus living and reigning in Mary ; in other words, of the Incarnation of the Word. I will content myself with saying these three words : We

have here the first mystery of Jesus Christ—the most hidden, the most exalted, and the least known. It is in this mystery that Jesus, in His Mother's womb, which is for that very reason called by the Saints the cabinet of the secrets of God, has, in concert with Mary, chosen all the elect. It is in this mystery that He has wrought all the other mysteries of His life by the acceptance which He made of them. *Jesus ingrediens mundum dicit, Ecce venio, ut faciam voluntatem tuam.* Consequently, this mystery is an abridgment of all mysteries and contains the will and grace of all. Finally, this mystery is the throne of the mercy, of the liberality, and of the glory of God. It is the throne of his mercy for us, because, as we cannot approach Jesus but by Mary, we can only see Jesus and speak to Him by her intercession. Jesus, who always hears His dear Mother, always grants His graces and mercy to poor sinners. *Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ.* It is the throne of His liberality for Mary, because, while the new Adam dwelt in that true terrestrial Paradise, He worked so many miracles in secret that neither Angels nor men can comprehend

them. It is on this account that the Saints call Mary the magnificence of God—*Magnificentia Dei*—as if God were only magnificent in Mary: *solummodo ibi magnificus Dominus*. It is the throne of His glory for His Father, because it is in Mary that Jesus Christ has calmed His Father, irritated against men, and that He has made restitution of the glory which sin ravished from Him, and that, by the sacrifice He made of His own will and of Himself, He has given Him more glory than ever the sacrifices of the ancient Law could do, and He gives Him now an infinite glory, which He never could have received from man.

Fifth Practice. Those who adopt this slavery ought also to have a great devotion to saying the Hail Mary (the Angelical Salutation). Few Christians, however enlightened, know the real price, merit, excellence, and necessity of the Hail Mary. It was necessary for the Blessed Virgin to appear several times to great and enlightened saints, to show them the merit of it. She did so to St. Dominic, St. John Capistran, and the Blessed Alan de la Roche. They have composed entire works on the wonders and efficacy of that prayer for

converting souls. They have loudly published and openly preached that, salvation having begun with the Hall Mary, the salvation of each one of us in particular is attached to that prayer. They tell us that it is that prayer which made the dry and barren earth bring forth the fruit of life: and that it is that prayer well said which makes the Word of God germinate in our souls, and bring forth Jesus Christ, the Fruit of life. They tell us that the Hall Mary is a heavenly dew for watering the earth, which is the soul, to make it bring forth its fruit in season; and that a soul which is not watered by that prayer bears no fruit, and brings forth only thorns and brambles, and is ready to be cursed.

Listen to what our Lady revealed to the B. Alan de la Roche, as he has recorded it in his book on the dignity of the Rosary: "Know, my son, and make all others know, that it is a probable and proximate sign of eternal damnation to have an aversion, a lukewarmness, or a negligence, in saying the Angelical Salutation, which has repaired the whole world," *Scias enim et securè intelligas et inde latè omnibus notum facias, quod videlicet signum probabile est et propinquum*

æternæ damnationis horre:e et acediari, ac negligere Salutationem Angelicam, totius mundi reparationem. These are words at once terrible and consoling, and which we should find it hard to believe if we had not that holy man for a guarantee, and St. Dominic before him, and many great men since. But we have also the experience of several ages ; for it has always been remarked that those who wear the outward look of reprobation, like impious heretics and proud worldlings, hate or despise the Hail Mary or the Rosary.

Heretics still learn and say the Our Father, but not the Hail Mary, nor the Rosary, That is their horror. They would rather wear a serpent than a Rosary.

The proud also, although Catholics, have the same inclinations as their father, Lucifer ; and so have only contempt or indifference for the Hail Mary, and look at the Rosary as at a devotion which is only good for the ignorant, and for those who cannot read. On the contrary, it is an equally universal experience that those who have otherwise great marks of predestination about them love and relish the Hail Mary, and delight in saying it. We always see the

more a man is for God, the more he likes that prayer. This is what our Lady said also to the Blessed Alan after the words which I have recently quoted. I do not know how it is, nor why, but, nevertheless, I well know that it is true: nor have I any better secret of knowing whether a person is for God than to examine if he likes to say the Hail Mary and the Rosary. I say *if he likes*; for it may happen that a person may be under some natural inability to say it or even a supernatural one; yet, nevertheless, he likes it always, and always inspires the same liking into others. O predestinate souls! slaves of Jesus in Mary! learn that the Hail Mary is the most beautiful of all prayers after the Our Father. It is the most perfect compliment which you can make to Mary, because it is the compliment which the Most High sent her by an archangel, in order to gain her heart; and it was so powerful over her heart by the secret charms of which it is so full, that in spite of her profound humility, she gave her consent to the Incarnation of the Word. It is by this compliment also that you will infallibly gain her heart, if you say it as you ought.

The Hail Mary well said—that is, with attention, devotion, and modesty—is, according to the Saints, the enemy of the devil which puts him to flight, and the hammer which crushes him. It is the sanctification of the soul, the joy of Angels, the melody of the predestinate, the canticle of the New Testament, the pleasure of Mary, and the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. The Hail Mary is a heavenly dew which fertilises the soul. It is the chaste and loving kiss which we give to Mary. It is a vermillion rose which we present to her; a precious pearl we offer her; a chalice of divine ambrosial nectar which we hold to her. All these are comparisons of the Saints.

I pray you urgently, by the love I bear you in Jesus and Mary, not to content yourselves with saying the Little Corona of the Blessed Virgin, but a whole Chaplet; or even, if you have time, the whole Rosary every day. At the moment of your death you will bless the day and hour in which you have followed my advice. Having thus sown in the benedictions of Jesus and Mary, you will reap eternal benedictions in heaven: *qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet.*

Sixth Practice. To thank God for the graces He has given to our Lady. Those who adopt this devotion will often say the Magnificat as the Blessed Mary d'Oignies did, and many other Saints. It is the only prayer, the only work, which the holy Virgin composed, or, rather, which Jesus composed in her; for He spoke by her mouth. It is the greatest sacrifice of praise which God ever received from a pure creature in the law of grace. It is, on the one hand, the most humble and grateful, and on the other hand, the most sublime and exalted, of all canticles. There are in that song mysteries so great and hidden that the Angels do not know them. The pious and erudite Gerson employed a great part of his life in composing works upon most difficult subjects; and yet it was only at the close of his career, and even then with trembling, that he undertook to comment on the Magnificat, so as to crown all his other works. He wrote a folio volume on it, and brings forward many admirable things about that beautiful and divine canticle. Among other things, he says that our Lady often repeated it herself, and especially for thanksgiving after Communion. The learned Ben-

zonius, in explaining the same Magnificat, relates many miracles wrought by the virtue of it, and says that the devils tremble and fly when they hear these words: *Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.*

Seventh Practice. Those faithful servants of Mary who adopt this devotion ought always greatly to despise, to hate, and to eschew the corrupted world, and to make use of those practices of the contempt of the world which we have given in the first part of this treatise.

2. *Particular and Interior Practices for those who wish to be perfect.*

Besides the external practices of the devotion which we have been describing so far, and which we must not omit through negligence or contempt, so far as the state and condition of each one will allow him to observe them, there are some very sanctifying interior practices for those whom the Holy Ghost calls to high perfection.

These may be expressed in four words: to do all our actions *by* Mary, *with* Mary, *in* Mary, and *for* Mary; so that we

may do them all the more perfectly *by* Jesus, *with* Jesus, *in* Jesus, and *for* Jesus.

I. We must do our actions *by* Mary ; that is to say, we must obey her in all things, and in all things conduct ourselves by her spirit, which is the Holy Spirit of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God—*Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei*. Those who are led by the spirit of Mary are the children of Mary, and consequently the children of God, as we have shown ; and among so many clients of the Blessed Virgin none are true or faithful but those who are led by her spirit. I have said that the spirit of Mary was the Spirit of God, because she was never led by her own spirit, but always by the Holy Ghost, who has rendered Himself so completely master of her, that He has become her own proper spirit. It is on this account that St. Ambrose says : *Sit in singulis Mariæ anima, ut magnificet Dominum ; sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ, ut exultet in Deo*—"Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to magnify the Lord, and the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God." A soul is happy indeed, when, like the good Jesuit lay brother Alphonso

Rodriguez, who died in the odour of sanctity, it is all possessed and overruled by the spirit of Mary, a spirit meek and strong, zealous and prudent, humble and courageous, pure and profound. In order that the soul may let itself be led by Mary's spirit, it must first of all renounce its own spirit, and its own proper lights and wills, before it does anything. For example: it should do so before its prayer, before its saying or hearing Mass, and before communicating; because the darkness of our own spirit, and the malice of our own will and operation, if we follow them, however good they may appear to us, will put an obstacle to the spirit of Mary. Secondly, we must deliver ourselves to the spirit of Mary to be moved and influenced by it in the manner she chooses. We must put ourselves and leave ourselves in her virginal hands, like a tool in the grasp of a workman, like a lute in the hands of a skilful player. We must lose ourselves, and abandon ourselves to her, like a stone one throws into the sea. This must be done simply, and in an instant, by one glance of the mind, by one little movement of the will, or even verbally, in saying, for example, I renounce

myself ; I give myself to thee, my dear Mother. We may not, perhaps, feel any sensible sweetness in this act of union, but it is not on that account the less real. It is just as if we were to say with equal sincerity, though without any sensible change in ourselves, what, may it please God, we never shall say, I give myself to the devil ; we should not the less truly belong to the devil because we did not *feel* we belonged to him. Thirdly, we must, from time to time, both during and after the action, renew the same act and offering of union. The more we shall do so, the more we shall be sanctified ; and we shall all the sooner attain to union with Jesus Christ, which always follows necessarily on our union with Mary, because the spirit of Mary is the spirit of Jesus.

II. We must do our actions *with* Mary ; that is to say, we must in all our actions regard Mary as an accomplished model of every virtue and perfection which the Holy Ghost has formed in a pure creature. for us to imitate according to our little measure. We must therefore in every action consider how Mary has done it, or how she would have done it, had she been in our place. For that end we must examine and meditate the

great virtues which she practised during her life, and particularly, first of all, her lively faith, by which she believed without hesitation the Angel's word, and believed it faithfully and constantly up to the foot of the Cross ; secondly, her profound humility, which made her hide herself, hold her peace, submit to everything, and put herself the last of all ; and, thirdly, her altogether divine purity, which never has had, and never can have, its equal under heaven ; and so on with all her other virtues. Let us remember, I repeat it for the second time, that Mary is the great and exclusive mould of God, proper to make living images of God, at small cost and in little time ; and that a soul which has found that mould, and has lost itself in it, is presently changed into Jesus Christ, whom that mould represents to the life.

III. We must do our actions *in* Mary. Thoroughly to understand this practice, we must know, first, that our Blessed Lady is the true terrestrial paradise of the new Adam, and that the ancient Paradise was but a figure of her. There are, then, in this earthly paradise, riches, beauties, rarities, and inexplicable sweetnesses, which Jesus

Christ, the new Adam, has left there ; it was in this paradise that He took His complacence for nine months, worked His wonders, and displayed His riches with the magnificence of a God. This most holy place is composed only of a virginal and immaculate earth, of which the new Adam was formed, and on which He was nourished, without any spot or stain, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who dwelt there. It is in this earthly paradise that there is the true tree of life which has borne Jesus Christ, the Fruit of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which has given light unto the world. There are in this divine place trees planted by the hand of God, and watered by His Divine unction, which have borne and dally bear fruits of a taste divine. There are flower-beds, enamelled with beautiful and various blossoms ; virtues, shedding odours which embalm the very Angels. There are meadows green with hope, impregnable towers of strength, and the most enticing houses of confidence. It is but the Holy Ghost who can make us know the hidden truth of these figures of material things. There are in this place an air of perfect purity ; a fair sun, without

shadow, of the Divinity ; a fair day, without night, of the Sacred Humanity ; a continual burning furnace of love, where all the iron that is cast into it is changed, by excessive heat, to gold. There is a river of humility; which springs from the earth, and which, dividing itself into four branches, waters all that enchanted place ; and these are the four cardinal virtues. The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the Fathers, also styles the Blessed Virgin the Eastern Gate, by which the High-Priest, Jesus Christ, enters the world and leaves it. By it He came the first time, and by it He will come the second.

In the next place, to comprehend thoroughly the practice of doing our actions *in Mary*, we must know that the most holy Virgin is the Sanctuary of the Divinity, the repose of the Most Holy Trinity, the throne of God, the city of God, the altar of God, the temple of God, the world of God. All these different epithets and panegyrics are most substantially true with reference to the different marvels which the Most High has wrought in Mary. Oh, what riches ! what glory ! what pleasure ! what happiness ! to be able to enter in and dwell in Mary, where

the Most High has set up the throne of His supreme glory! But how difficult it is for sinners like ourselves to have the permission, the capacity, and the light to enter into a place so high and so holy, which is guarded not by one of the Cherubim like the old earthly Paradise, but by the Holy Ghost Himself, who is its absolute Master! He Himself has said of it, *Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus*; Mary is shut, Mary is sealed. The miserable children of Adam and Eve, driven from the earthly Paradise, cannot enter into this one, except by a particular grace of the Holy Ghost, which they ought to merit

After we have obtained this illustrious grace by our fidelity, we must remain in the fair interior of Mary with complacency, repose there in peace, lean our weight there in confidence, hide ourselves there with assurance, and lose ourselves there without reserve. Thus, in that virginal bosom, 1. the soul shall be nourished with the milk of grace and maternal mercy; 2. it shall be delivered from its troubles, fears, and scruples; and 3. it shall be in safety against all its enemies—the world, the devil, and sin—

who never have an entrance there. It is on this account that Mary says that they who work in her shall not sin: *Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt*; that is to say, those who dwell in Mary's spirit shall fall into no considerable fault. Lastly, 4. the soul shall be formed in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in it, because her bosom is, as the Holy Fathers say, the chamber of the divine Sacraments, where Jesus Christ and all the elect have been formed.

IV. Finally, we must do all our actions for Mary. As we have given ourselves up entirely to her service, it is but just to do everything for her as a servant and a slave. It is not that we can take her for the last end of our services, for that is Jesus Christ alone; but we may take her for our proximate end, or : mysterious means, and our easy way to go to Him. Like a good servant and slave, we must not remain idle, but supported by her protection, we must undertake and achieve great things for this august Sovereign. We must defend her privileges when they are disputed; we must stand up for her glory when it is attacked; we must entice all the world, if we can, to her service and to this true and

solid devotion ; we must speak and cry out
against those who abuse her devotion to
outrage her Son, and we must at the same
time establish this Veritable Devotion ; we
must pretend to no recompense for our little
services, except the honour of belonging
to so sweet a Queen, and the happiness of
being united by her to Jesus her Son by
an indissoluble tie in time and in eternity.

Glory to Jesus in Mary !

Glory to Mary in Jesus !

Glory to God Alone !

THE TREE OF LIFE, ITS CULTURE AND GROWTH ;

OR, HOW TO MAKE MARY LIVE AND REIGN IN
OUR SOULS.

Predestined soul, have you understood, by the light of the Holy Ghost, what has been said ? If so, thank God, for it is a secret unknown to almost all the world. If you have found the treasure hidden in the field of Mary, the precious pearl of the Gospel, you must sell all that you have and buy it ; you must make a sacrifice of yourself into the hands of Mary, that you may happily lose yourself in her, in order to find in her, God alone.

If the Holy Ghost has planted in your soul the true Tree of Life ; that is to say, the devotion which I have just explained, you must cultivate it carefully, that it may yield its fruit in due season. It is the mustard-seed spoken of in the Gospel, which is the " least indeed of all seeds, but when it is grown up, is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches : " that is to say, the predestined, who make their nests in its

branches, rest in its shade, and hide there in safety from the beasts of prey.

Predestined soul, this is the way to cultivate it :—

1. This tree, when planted in a truly faithful heart, requires to be in the open air without any human support ; being divine, it must be kept free from any creature which might prevent it ascending to its principal end, which is God. Therefore, the soul must not depend upon its own skill, its natural talents, its good name, or the protection of men ; it must have recourse only to Mary, and rely on her alone.

2. The soul in which this tree is planted must be ever occupied, like a good gardener, in looking after it. For this tree, having life and having to produce the fruit of life, requires continual cultivation in order that it may grow ; and it should be the aim of the soul, if it would become perfect, to think of this often, and even to make of it its chief occupation.

3. The thorns and thistles which, in time, might choke this Tree of Life and prevent it yielding fruit, must be cut off and rooted up : that is to say, the soul must be faithful in cutting away and retrenching all

useless satisfactions ; it must do violence to itself, in order to live no longer the life of the senses ; it must crucify the flesh. keep silence, and avoid all vain intercourse with creatures.

4. It must watch to see that caterpillars do not harm the Tree. The caterpillars are self-love, the love of ease, the love of its own purely natural satisfaction, which, by eating the flowers and green leaves, destroy the fair hopes which the Tree had of yielding fruit ; for love of self and love of Mary, never agree.

5. It must not suffer beasts of prey to approach it. These are the sins, which would bring death to the Tree of Life by their mere touch : even their breath must not be allowed to fall upon it ; by this I mean, venial sin, which is always very dangerous, if no trouble is taken about it.

6. This divine Tree must be often watered by the soul with fervent exercises of piety. confession, communion, and prayer both public and private, for, without these it would soon cease to yield fruit.

7. The soul must not be troubled, if this Tree be violently shaken by the wind ; for it is necessary that the wind of tempta-

tion should endeavour to uproot it ; that snow and ice should surround it, in order, if possible, to destroy it : that is to say, this devotion to the Blessed Virgin must of necessity, be attacked and contradicted ; the soul, however, has nothing to fear provided it persevere in the cultivation of this Tree.

Predestined soul, if you cultivate, according to these directions, this Tree of Life, newly planted in you by the Holy Ghost, in a little while it will grow so high that the birds of heaven shall dwell in it ; it will become so perfect, that it shall yield its fruit of honour and grace in due season ; that is to say, the sweet and adorable Jesus, Who always has been, and always shall be, the only fruit of Mary.

Happy the soul in which Mary, the Tree of Life, has been planted ; happier the soul in which she has been able to grow and to bloom ; very happy the soul in which she yields her fruit ; but happiest of all is the soul which preserves this fruit until death and for ever and ever. Amen.

Qui tenet teneat.

If you have the happiness to possess this Tree of Life, guard it as a precious treasure and cultivate it with care.

PRAYER TO JESUS.

O most sweet Jesus, behold me at Thy feet, filled with gratitude towards Thee for the grace Thou hast granted me in giving me to Thy Holy Mother as her loving slave, that she may be my advocate in the presence of Thy adorable Majesty, and supply for all my defects and short-comings. Alas ! Lord, I am so wretched, that, without this dear Mother, I should beyond all doubt be lost. Yes ! Mary is necessary to me in Thy presence for all things : necessary to appease Thy just wrath, since I have so often offended Thee, and offend Thee yet every day ; necessary to prevent the eternal punishment which I deserve from Thy justice ; necessary to approach Thee, to look at Thee, to pray to Thee, to speak with Thee, and to please Thee ; necessary to save my soul, and the souls of others ; necessary, in a word, that Thy holy Will may be always done, and Thy

greater glory procured in all things. Ah, would that I could publish throughout all the world this mercy which Thou hast shown me! Would that all the world might know that without Mary I should be already lost! Would that I could offer worthy thanksgiving for such a benefit! Mary is in me, *hæc facia est mihi*. Oh, what a treasure! Oh, what consolation! And after this, shall I not be all hers? Oh, what ingratitude! My dear Savior, let me die rather than suffer this misfortune to happen to me: for I would rather die than live, unless I belong altogether to Mary. I have taken her, a thousand and a thousand times with St. John the Evangelist, at the foot of the Cross for my only good, and as many times have I given myself to her; but I have not yet done so as Thou wouldst wish, dear Jesus; I do so now, and if Thou seest in my soul or in my body anything not belonging to this August Princess, I pray Thee root it up, and cast it far from me, for if it does not belong to Mary, it is unworthy of Thee.

O Holy Ghost, grant me all these graces. Plant, water, and cultivate in my soul this sweet Mary, who is the Tree of the only true Life, so that this Tree may grow,

and flower, and bring forth the fruit of Life in abundance. O Holy Spirit, give me a great devotion and a great attraction towards Mary, Thy Divine Spouse; let me find strength in her maternal bosom, and an abiding refuge in her mercy, so that in her and by her, Thou mayest form in me a life-like image of Jesus Christ, great and powerful even unto the fulness of His perfect age. Amen.

PRAYER TO MARY.

Hail, Mary, beloved daughter of the Eternal Father! Hail, Mary, admirable mother of the divine Son! Hail, Mary, most faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost! Hail, Mary, my dear Mother, my sweet Mistress, and my powerful Sovereign! Hail, my joy, my glory, my heart, and my soul! Thou art all mine by mercy, and I am all thine by justice: but I am not sufficiently thine as yet: Therefore, once again, I give myself wholly to thee as thy eternal slave, without keeping back anything for myself or for others. If thou seest anything in me now not belonging to thee, I pray thee to take it away instantly and make thyself absolute Mistress of the faculties of my soul; de-

stroy all, root up, and bring to nought everything therein that may be displeasing to God ; plan, build, and accomplish there all that may seem good to thee. May the light of thy faith dispel the darkness of my mind ; may thy deep humility take the place of my pride ; may thy sublime contemplation arrest the distraction of my wandering imagination ; may thy continual sight of God fill my memory with His Presence : may the fire of thy charity atone for the luke warmness, the coldness of my own ; may thy virtues take the place of my sins ; may thy merits be my ornament, and supply for all that is wanting in me before God ! Lastly, most dear and well-beloved Mother, grant, if it may be, that I may have no other spirit but thine, to know Jesus Christ, and His divine and blessed Will ; that I may have no other soul, but thine, to praise and glorify the Lord ; that I may have no other heart but thine to love God with a pure and burning love. I ask of thee neither visions, nor raptures, nor revelations, nor satisfactions, nor raptures, nor even spiritual sweetnesses ; to thee belongs full enjoyment without bitterness ; thine the part to reign glorious and triumph-

ant at the right hand of thy Son in heaven, without humiliation ; thine, to have absolute power over angels, over men, and over demons, without their being able to resist thee, and thine, to dispose of all the good things of God, without reserve. This, O divine Mary, is that better part, which Our Lord hath given thee, and which shall never be taken from thee, and it is this which fills my heart with joy.

For my portion here below, I wish for nothing that was not thine ; that is to say, I wish to believe firmly, without either tasting or seeing ; to suffer joyfully, without consolation from creatures ; to die continually to myself, without a moment's respite, and to labor earnestly for thee, even until death, without any interest of my own, as the lowest of thy slaves.

The only grace I ask of thee, out of pure mercy, is that every day and every moment of my life, I may lovingly say,— *Amen, so be it !* to all that thou didst do on earth ; *Amen, so be it !* to all that thou art doing now in heaven ; *Amen, so be it !* to all that thou art doing in my soul, so that there may be none but thou, to glorify Jesus in me to the full, through time, and through eternity. *Amen.*

OFFERING OF OUR ACTIONS TO GOD.

*(May be made every morning.)**

O Eternal Wisdom, O sweet and gentle Jesus! Humbly prostrate at Thy feet, I wish to offer Thee as perfectly as the Most Holy Virgin, my thoughts, my words, and my actions of this day. Like her and by her, I wish to do all things for Thy love, and for Thy Glory; to serve Thee, to praise Thee, to bless Thee, and to draw down upon my soul all the grace of which I stand in need. I desire, to-day, with all the ardour of my Mother's Heart, to be enlightened in the mysteries of the Faith, to have part in Thy mercy, to satisfy Thy divine justice, to make my salvation sure, and to obtain for all sinners the grace of true conversion, for the souls in purgatory deliverance and relief, for the just, increase of virtue, and for Religious Orders, perseverance in their first fervour.

Deign to accept, O God of goodness, this my intention which I would fain offer Thee at every instant of my life, begging Thee, by the Most Holy Virgin,

* This prayer is not by the Ven. de Montfort, but is taken from the Poitiers edition of the "Secret of Mary." (Tr.)

to bless me, and to grant me the grace never to commit a mortal, nor even a deliberate venial sin.

I desire, also, to be present in spirit at all the Masses which are celebrated throughout the whole world, I purpose to gain all possible Indulgences, and I beg my most dear Mother, into whose hands I have abandoned all things, to apply them herself according to her will, and the order of my obligations. Amen.

GOD ALONE.

The Devout Slave of Jesus in Mary,

BY

Blessed Louls-Marle Grignon de Montfort.

Sing, my soul, my Saviour's glory,
Sing, my soul, our Lady's name,
Sing the great and gracious favours
Mary's servants all can claim.

Chorus. *

Onward Christians, on to Jesus,
On through Mary, ever on !
This the secret of salvation—
Through the Mother to the Son.

Oh ! that I to all creation
Could the joyful news attest—
That the happiest of the happy
Are the souls that serve her best.

Chorus.

* When the tune may require it, the following refrain
may be used :—

Christians, on to Jesus,
Mary is the way, so ever on !
God's elect have taught us,
The Mother leads us ever to her Sou.

Christians, hearken to my story
Hearken, God's elect and true,
For I sing her mighty marvels,
Who gave birth to all of you.

Chorus.

Mary is my goodly treasure,
After Jesus all my wealth,
All my joy, and all my sweetness,
All my soul's sustaining health.

Chorus.

Mary is my ark of mercy
In God's covenant with man ;
Her's the only spotless vesture
Ever since man's sin began.

Chorus.

Mary is the shrine of Jesus,
For my Lord is ever there ;
There my prayer is heard in glory,
Never need I there despair.

Chorus.

Mary is my refuge-city, [nigh,
Where nor harm nor wrong comes
When the water-flood sweeps o'er me,
She the rainbow in the sky.

Yes, I lean upon her wholly,
On my Lord to lean the more,
Leaving all to His kind forethought,
Body, soul, and earthly store.

When I cry to God, my Father,
From my depth of sinful woe,
Safe beneath my Mother's shelter
To His goodness can I go.

When I dread the wrath of Jesus,
Who with her is never wroth,
Then I whisper : See, Thy Mother
Is the Mother of us both !

She, my Mother and my Mistress,
Succour in adversity,
When I fall from very weakness,
In a moment raises me.

When my soul is sore and troubled
By my sins both night and day,
Comes a peace all thought surpassing
As for Mary's help I pray.

In the midst of all my combats
She it is who says to me :
"Courage, child, and fear no longer,
I can ne'er abandon thee."

Who is he that will believe it ?
Mary lives within my heart,
Graven there in rays of glory
Though my faith but "knows in

[part.]"

She, though fruitful, ever Virgin,
Pure and fruitful renders me ;
I, through her, am strong and gentle,
By her deep humililty.

Mary is my pure, clear fountain.
Where her Son's reflection gleams,
Where my spirit in its dryness
Drinks the fresh, life-giving streams.

'Tis through Jesus to the Father
That, without repulse, I fly ;
'Tis to Jesus, through His Mother,
That, all fearless, I draw nigh.

Working in her, working by her,
I can tread as Jesus trod ;
'Tis the secret ' to be holy,
And to do the Will of God.

Oh ! that I could love her better !
Help me, Christians, I implore !
Love of Jesus, love of Mary,
Lo ! our love for evermore.

PRAYER

OF THE

BLESSED DE MONTFORT

Asking God to Send him Missionaries for
his Company of Mary.

Remember, O Lord, remember Thy Congregation which Thou hast possessed from the beginning, thinking of it from all eternity ; it was held in Thy almighty hand, when, by a word, Thou didst create the world out of nothing ; it was hidden in Thy heart, when Thy divine Son, dying on the Cross, consecrated it by His death, and confided it, as a precious deposit, to the care of His most holy Mother : *Memor esto Congregationis tue quam possedisti ab initio.*

Accomplish, O Lord, Thy merciful designs ; raise up Thy righthand men, such men as Thou hast shown in prophetic knowledge to some of Thy greatest servants,—to St. Francis of Paula, to St. Vincent Ferrer, to St. Catherine of Sienna, and to many other great souls during the last two centuries.

Memento : O Almighty God, vouchsafe to remember this Company, applying to it all the might of Thy arm, which is not shortened, to create it, to produce it, and to bring it to perfection. *Innova signa, immuta mirabilia, sentiamus adjutorium brachii tui.*

Great God ! Thou Who out of rough stones canst raise up children to Abraham, in the might of Thy Godhead, say but one word to provide good laborers for Thy harvest and good missionaries for Thy Church.

Memento : God of infinite goodness, remember Thy mercies of old, and, by these same mercies, remember this Congregation ; remember the reiterated promises which Thou hast made to us by Thy Prophets and by Thine own Son, to grant us all our lawful requests. Remember the prayers that have been offered Thee by Thy Servants for this end for so many centuries : let their wishes, their sighs, their tears, and the blood they have shed for Thee come into Thy presence and earnestly implore Thy mercy. But, above all, remember Thy dear Son : *Respice in faciem Christi tui* (1). Contem-

(1) Ps. LXXXIII, 10.

plate His agony, His shame and confusion, His loving complaint in the Garden of Olives, when He said : *Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo ?* (1) His cruel Death, His Blood poured out, loudly implore Thy mercy, in order that, by means of this Congregation, His empire may be established upon the ruins of that of His enemies.

Memento : Remember, O Lord, this Community in the effects of Thy justice. *Tempus faciendi, Domine, dissipaverunt legem tuam* (2) : it is time to do what Thou hast promised. Thy divine law is transgressed ; Thy Gospel ignored ; Thy religion abandoned ; torrents of iniquity overwhelm the world, carrying away even Thy servants ; the whole earth is made desolate : *Desolatione desolata est omnis terra* (3) ; impiety is enthroned ; Thy sanctuary is profaned, and abomination has reached even the holy place. Wilt Thou suffer this any longer, just Lord, God of vengeance ? Will the end of all be like that of Sodom and Gomorrah ? Wilt thou be for ever silent ? Must not Thy Will be done on earth as it is in

(1) Ps. XXIX, 10.

(2) Ps. CXVIII, 123.

(3) Jerem., XII, 2.

heaven ? Must not Thy kingdom come ? Hast Thou not given to some of Thy friends a prophetic glimpse of the future renovation of Thy Church ? Are not the Jews to be converted to the truth ? Is not this what the Church expects ? Do not all the Saints in heaven cry out to Thee : “Justice, *Vindica* ?” Do not all the just on earth say to Thee : *Amen, veni, Domine* ? (1) Do not all creatures, even the most insensible, moan under the weight of the numberless sins of Babylon and call for Thy coming to re-establish all things ? *Omnis creatura ingemiscit* (2).

Lord Jesus, *memento Congregationis tuæ*. Remember to give to Thy Mother a new Company, who, through her, will renew all things, and thus, through Mary, complete the years of grace as, through her, Thou didst begin them.

Da matri tuæ liberos, alioquin, moriar : give to Thy Mother, children, servants, or let me die. *Da Matri tuæ*. It is for Thy Mother's sake that I pray to Thee. Remember that Thou didst dwell within her womb, wert nourished at her breasts, and reject

(1) Apoc., XXII, 20.

(2) Rom., VIII, 22.

me not ; remember whose Son Thou art and hear me ; remember what she is to Thee and what Thou art to her and grant my requests. What is it I am asking from Thee ? Nothing for myself, all for her glory. What am I asking of Thee ? What Thou canst, and even, I dare say, what Thou *shouldst* grant me, being as Thou art the true God to Whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth, and the best of all children, loving Thy Mother with infinite love.

What am I asking of Thee ? *Liberos* : Priests free with Thy freedom, detached from all, without father, or mother, or brothers or sisters, without relations according to the flesh, without friends according to the world, without means, without worry, without cares, and even without any will of their own.

Liberos : Slaves of Thy love and of Thy will ; men, according to Thy heart, who, without self-will to soil and stop them, accomplish all Thy designs and crush all Thy enemies : other Davids, with the staff of the Cross and the sling of the holy Rosary in their hands : *In baculo Cruce et in virga Virgine.*

Liberos : Sons elevated above the earth and filled with heavenly dew, who, without impediment, fly hither and thither in accordance with the breath of the Holy Spirit. It was of them, in part, Thy prophets knew, when they asked : *Qui sunt isti qui ut nubes volant ?* (1) *Ubi erat impetus spiritus, illuc, gradiebantur.* (2)

Liberos : People ever at thy hand, ever ready to obey Thee, like Samuel, at the voice of their superiors : *Præcio sum* ; ever ready to run and suffer everything with Thee and for Thee, like the Apostles : *Famus et nos, ut moriamur cum eo.* (3)

Liberos : True children of Mary, Thy Holy Mother, who are begotten and conceived by her charity, carried in her bosom, fastened to her breasts, nourished with her milk, reared under her care, upheld by her arms and enriched with her graces.

Liberos : True servants of the Blessed Virgin, who, like another Saint Dominic, would go everywhere with the bright and burning torch of the holy Gospels in their mouth, and the holy Rosary in their hand.

(1) Isais, LX, 8.

(3) St. John, XI, 16.

(2) Ezech., L, 12.

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barking, like faithful watch-dogs, at the wolves who would fain tear to pieces the flock of Jesus-Christ; burning like fires, and lighting up the darkness of the world, like suns; men, who would, by means of a true devotion to Mary, that is to say, interior, not hypocritical; exterior, not critical; prudent, not ignorant; tender, not indifferent; constant, not unsteady; and holy, without presumption, crush, whithersoever they went, the head of the old serpent, in order that the curse Thou gavest him might be entirely accomplished. *Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum* (1).

It is true, great God, that, as Thou hast predicted, the world will lay mighty snares to entrap the heel of this mysterious woman; that is to say, the little Company of her children who will come towards the end of the world, and that there will be a mighty enmity between this blessed posterity of Mary and the cursed race of Satan: but it is a divine enmity, and the only one of which Thou art the author: *Inimicitias ponam*. But these combats and persecutions,

(1) Gen., III, 15.

which the children of the race of Bellal will indict on Thy Blessed Mother's race, will only serve to show to greater advantage the power of Thy grace, the courage of their virtue, and the authority of Thy Mother: since Thou hast given her, from the beginning of the world, the commission to crush this proud spirit by the humility of her heart: *Ipsa conteret caput tuum.*

Alioquin moriar. Is it not better that I should die rather than see my God cruelly offended every day, and myself in constant danger of being carried away by the unopposed and ever increasing torrents of iniquity? Ah! death would be to me a thousand times preferable. Either send me help from heaven, or take away my soul. Yes, if I did not hope that sooner or later, Thou wouldst, in the interests of Thy glory, hear this poor sinner as Thou hast already heard so many others: *Iste pauper clamavit et Dominus exaudivit eum* (1), I would pray to Thee just as the prophet did: *Tolle animam meam* (2).

But the confidence which I have in Thy mercy makes me say, with another prophet:

(1) Ps. XXXIII. 6.

(2) 3 Kings, XIX. 4.

Non moriar sed vivam, et narrabo opera Domihi (1); until I can say with Simeon: *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine—in pace* (2), *quia viderunt oculi mei, etc.*

Memento: O Holy Spirit, remember to produce and to form children of God with Thy divine and faithful Spouse, Mary. Thou didst form Jesus-Christ, the chief of the predestined, with her and in her; it is with her and in her that Thou shouldst form all His members; thou begettest no divine person in the Divinity; but it is Thou alone Who formest all divine persons out of the Divinity; and all the Saints that have been or that shall be until the end of the world, are so many works of Thy love united with Mary. The special reign of God the Father lasted until the deluge, and was concluded by a deluge of water; the reign of Jesus-Christ was concluded by a deluge of blood; but Thy reign, Spirit of the Father and of the Son, continues at the present time, and will be concluded by a deluge of fire, of love and of justice.

When shall it come, this deluge of fire and pure love, which Thou art to enkindle in all

(1) Ps. CXVII, 17.

(2) St. Luke, II, 29.

the earth with so much strength and sweetness that all nations, Turks, idolaters, even the Jews will burn with it and be converted? *Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.* (1)

Accendatur : May this divine fire, which Jesus-Christ came to bring to the world, be enkindled before that of Thy anger, which will reduce everything to ashes. *Emitte Spiritum tuum, et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terræ* (2). Send forth this Spirit of fire upon the earth, to create thereon priests all afire, by whose ministry the face of the earth may be renewed, and Thy Church reformed.

Memento Congregationis tuæ ; It is a congregation, an assembly, a choice, a selection of predestined souls which Thou must make in the world and of the world : *Ego elegeros de mundo* (3). It is a flock of peaceful sheep which Thou must collect from among the wolves ; a company of chaste doves and royal eagles from among so many ravens ; a swarm of honey bees from among so many wasps ; a herd of fleet deer from

(1) Ps. XVIII, 7.

(2) Ps. CXII, 30.

(3) St. John, XVII, 6.

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among so many tortoises ; a battalion of courageous lions from among so many timid hares. Ah ! Lord : *Congrega nos de nationibus* (1). Call us together, unite us, that we may render all glory to Thy holy and powerful Name.

Thou didst predict this illustrious company to Thy Prophet, who speaks of it in divine, but in very obscure and very secret terms : *Pluviam voluntariam segregabis, Deus, hereditati tuæ, et infirmata est, tu vero perfecisti eam. Animalia tua habitabunt in ea. Parasti in dulcedine tua pauperi, Deus. Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus virtute multâ. Rex virtutem dilecti, dilecti, et speciei domus dividere spolia. Si dormiatis inter medios cleros, pennæ columbæ deargentatæ, et posteriora dorsi ejus in pallore auri. Dum discernit cœlestis greges super eam, nive dealbuntur in Selmon. Mons Dei, mons pinguis ; mons coagulatus, mons pinguis ; ut quid suspicamini montes coagulatos ? Mons in quo beneplacitum est Deo habitare in eo, etenim Dominus habitabit in finem* (2).

What is this voluntary rain which Thou hast separated and chosen for Thy weak-

(1) Ps. CV, 47.

(2) Ps. LXVII, 10-17.

ened heritage, if not these holy missionaries, children of Mary, Thy Spouse, which Thou art to assemble and to separate from the world, for the good of Thy Church so stained and so weakened by the crimes of her children ?

What are these animals and the poor who will dwell in Thy heritage, to be there nourished with the heavenly sweetness which Thou hast prepared for them, if not these poor missionaries trusting in Providence who will be satiated with Thy divine joys ; if not those mysterlous animals of Ezechiel, having the humanity of man, by their disinterested and beneficent charity towards their neighbor ; the courage of the lion by their holy anger and their ardent, prudent zeal against the demons and the children of Babylon ; the strength of the ox, by their apostolic labors and their mortification of the flesh ; and finally, the swiftness of the eagle, by their contemplation in God ?

These are the missionaries which Thou wishest to send to Thy Church. They shall have the eye of a man for their neighbor, the eye of a lion for Thy enemies, the eye of an ox for themselves, and

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the eye of an eagle for Thee. These imitators of the Apostles shall preach *virtute multâ, virtute magnâ*, with a strength and a virtue so great and so striking, that they will stir up all minds and all hearts wheresoever they will preach. It is to them that Thou wilt give Thy word :

Dabis verbum ; even Thy mouth and Thy wisdom : *Dabo vobis os et sapientiam, cui non poterunt resistere omnes adversarii vestri* (1), which not one of Thy enemies shall be able to resist.

O amiable Jesus ! it is among these well-beloved that Thou, as King of the virtues, wilt take Thy delights ; for, in all their missions, they shall have no other end in view, than that of giving to Thee all the glory of the spoils taken from Thy enemies : *Recæ virtutum, dilecti, dilecti, et speciei domûs dividere spolia* (2).

By their trust in Providence and their devotion to Mary, they shall have the silvery wings of the dove : *inter medios ceros, penne columbæ deargentatæ* : that is to say, the purity of doctrine and morals ; and a golden back, *et posteriora dorsi ejus in pallore*

(1) St. Luke, XXI, 15.

(2) Ps. LXVII, 13.

auri (1) : that is to say, a perfect charity towards their neighbor to bear with their defects, and a great love for Jesus-Christ to carry His Cross.

Thou alone, O Jesus, as King of heaven and King of kings, shalt set apart from the world these missionaries, like so many kings, in order to make them whiter than the snows on the top of Mount Selmon, mountain of God, abundant and fertile mountain, strong and coagulated mountain, in which God takes wonderful delight, and in which He dwells and shall dwell until the end.

Lord God of Truth, who is this mysterious mountain of which Thou sayest such wonderful things, if not Mary, Thy dear Spouse, whose foundations Thou hast placed upon the tops of the highest mountains? *Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis* (2)—*Mons in vertice montium.* (3)

Happy and a thousand times happy are the priests whom Thou hast chosen and predestined to dwell with Thee upon this abundant and divine mountain, there to be-

(1) Ps. LXVII, 14.

(2) Ps. LXXXVI, 1.

(3) Mich., VI, 2.

come the kings of eternity by their contempt of the world and their elevation in God ; there to be made whiter than snow by their union with Mary, Thy Spouse all-beautiful, all-pure and all-immaculate ; there to be enriched with the dew of heaven and the fat of the land, with all the temporal and eternal blessings with which Mary is filled.

It is from the top of this mountain that, like another Moses, they shall direct the arrows of their ardent prayers against their enemies to crush or to convert them ; It is upon this mountain that they shall learn, even from the mouth of Jesus-Christ, Who ever dwells there, the meaning of His eight beatitudes ; it is upon this mountain of God that they shall be transfigured with Him as upon Thabor, die with Him as upon Calvary, and ascend to heaven with Him as upon mount Olivet.

Memento Congregationis tue.—It is Thy grace alone that must form this company ; if man touch it first, nothing will be done ; if he interfere with Thy work, he will spoil all, overturn all. *Tue Congregationis* : It is Thy work, great God : *Opus tuum fac.* Do

Thy all-divine work ; collect, call, gather together Thy elect from all places over which Thou hast domination and make of them a strong army to defend Thee against Thy enemies.

Seest Thou, Lord, God of Battles, seest Thou the captains who are forming complete companies, the potentates who are making up immense armies, the navy bringing together whole fleets, the merchants assembling in large numbers at the markets and the fairs ? Crowds of robbers, drunkards, libertines, impious men, are uniting against Thee easily and promptly every day ! The sound of a whistle, the beat of a drum, the sight of a blunt sword-tip, the promise of a withered laurel wreath, the offer of a bit of gold or silver ; in a word, a breath of fame, an earthly interest, a vile pleasure for which they long, can, in a moment, reunite robbers, gather together soldiers, join battalions, assemble merchants, fill houses and market-places, and cover the earth and the sea with an innumerable multitude of the reprobate, who, though all divided amongst themselves, either by the places whence they came, by the difference in their

dispositions, or by their personal interests, are nevertheless united as one man, until death, to fight against Thee under the banner and the leadership of the devil.

And we, great God! though there is so much glory and profit, so much sweetness and so many advantages to be gained by serving Thee, shall there be so few to take up Thy cause? Hardly any soldiers under Thy banner? Hardly a St. Michael to proclaim among Thy brethren, through zeal for Thy glory: *Quis ut Deus?*

Ah! let me, let me cry out everywhere: Fire! Fire! Fire!—Help! Help! Help! Fire in the house of God! Fire in souls! Fire even within the sanctuary! Help for our brother who is being murdered! Help for our children whose throats are being cut! Help for our Father who is being stabbed! *Si quis est Domini, jungatur mihi.* (1) Let all good priests who are spread over the Christian world, and those who are actually in the warfare and those who have withdrawn from the combat to bury themselves in deserts and solitude, let them all come forward and unite with us: *bis unita fit fortior*, in or-

(1) Exodus, XXXII, 26.

der that we may form, under the banner of the Cross, a well-regulated army in battle array, to attack, all together, the enemies of God who have already sounded the alarm : *Sonnerunt, frenduerunt, multiplicati sunt. Dirumpamus vincula eorum et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum. Qui habitat in caelis irridebit eos. Exurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici ejus. Exurge, Domine, quare obdormis ? Exurge.*

Arise, O Lord : why pretendest Thou to sleep ? Arise in Thy might, Thy mercy and Thy justice, to form for Thyself a chosen bodyguard to keep Thy house, to defend Thy glory, and to save these souls bought at the price of all Thy Blood, that there may be but one fold and one shepherd, and that all may glorify Thee in Thy holy temple : *Et in templo ejus omnes dicunt gloriam. Amen.*

Manner of Hearing Mass in Union with Mary.

Mary speaks to the soul :—

“ When the priest begins the Holy Sacrifice, consider yourself on mount Calvary. Collect your thoughts and unite with my

dispositions. While the priest recites the Confiteor at the foot of the altar, think of the Agony of Jesus, Eternal Wisdom, in the Garden of Olives. . Make a short examination of conscience, excite yourself to contrition and I will teach you how to sacrifice yourself with my divine Son."

I. FROM THE INTROIT TO THE GOSPEL.

How to Praise and Honour the infinite Majesty of God.

"From the beginning of Mass to the Gospel, think of paying to God the homage which is His due. But how can you do it? Know you not that all the praise and adoration of the angels and of the saints, even the praise and adoration which I myself ceaselessly offer to the most Holy Trinity, are as nothing before God for He is infinitely great? Jesus only, Wisdom Incarnate, can give to the Eternal Father perfect worship, and this He does by His abasement in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Offer then to me the humiliation of my Son, and, for this purpose, humble yourself profoundly, renounce your own dispositions, and, full of confidence and love, say in union with me :"

O my God, I adore Thee and acknowledge Thee for my Creator, the Lord and Master of my life. I confess that all I am and all I have comes from Thy bountiful hand. And because Thy Sovereign Majesty is deserving of infinite honor and homage, and that of myself I am unable to render unto Thee that which I owe Thee, I offer Thee the humiliations of my Savior; I offer Thee, for myself and for all creatures, the homage which Jesus offers Thee upon this altar. Look down, O Lord, upon the face of Thy Christ, upon that beloved Son in Whom Thou art well pleased. That which Jesus does, I wish to do with Him. And in order to do this more perfectly, it is *with Mary* and *by Mary* that I wish to humble myself and to adore Thee.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me. Supply what is wanting to make my homage worthy of my Creator. Offer Him the joy of thy heart at the infinite honor which is rendered to the Divine Majesty in this August Sacrifice.

“Continue these interior acts without troubling yourself about putting them into words. The more you will enter into my dispositions, the more perfect will be the sen-

timents of humility and adoration which I will suggest to you. Oh, what joy you will give to the Most Holy Trinity and to me !”

II. FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE ELEVATION.

*How to satisfy for the Sins of which
you are guilty.*

Mary to the soul :

“Cast a glance at your sins and see what a debt you have contracted. One single mortal sin weighs more in the balance of the justice of God than all the good works of the saints, more even than the innumerable merits which by His grace I have been able to acquire. Nothing less than the Blood of my Son shed upon Calvary can appease the anger of God. While the priest at the holy altar is offering for you His Most Precious Blood, call to mind the tears which I shed for you on Calvary as well as those which, many and many a time, I shed after the Ascension of Jesus, whether while passing along the *Via Dolorosa* at Jerusalem, or while present at the Holy Sacrifice, when it was offered by John my adopted son. Think of this, mingle your

tears with mine, and say with a broken and contrite heart :”

Behold me at Thy feet, O my God. I am ungrateful and guilty. Time and again have I offended Thy divine Majesty, but, now, I am heartily sorry for having done so. In expiation I offer Thee what is most pleasing in Thy sight,—the humiliations of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Eternal Wisdom, by which He satisfied Thy divine Justice for me and which He now offers Thee on this Altar ?

Accept then, O Lord, with the tears of Mary, the merits of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus, Jesus Himself, Thy Son from all eternity and Mary's Son in time, Who, as the Great Victim, deigns to renew His sacrifice in my favour. Yes, Jesus on this altar has become my Mediator and my Advocate ; by His precious Blood He is asking pardon for me, and I dare to unite my voice with His, and to ask of Thee pardon for the numberless sins which I have committed, and for all the sins of the world. The Blood of Jesus cries to Thee for mercy, and my heart, penetrated with sorrow, unites with this divine cry. O my God, if Thou art insensible to my tears, listen to the sighs

of Jesus, to the prayers of Mary ! If, upon the Cross, Jesus obtained pardon for the whole human race, why should He not obtain it for me upon this altar ? Yes, I hope, by virtue of His precious Blood and for the love of Mary, Thy well-beloved daughter, that Thou wilt pardon me all my sins. I shall grieve for them all the days of my life. Grant, also, O Lord, to all the sinners of the world, the grace of repentance and a true conversion.

O Mary, Mother of God, thou knowest how guilty I am ; obtain for me the tears of Peter, the contrition of Mary Magdalen, and the sorrow of so many souls, who, from sinners became saints, that I may receive, by the merits of this Holy Sacrifice, the entire pardon of all my sins.

“Renew these acts of lively and profound sorrow. I will offer them to my divine Son, and thus will all your indebtedness be cancelled.”

III. FROM THE ELEVATION TO THE COMMUNION.

How to Thank God for the Benefits which He has heaped upon you.

“Recall to mind the favors which God has bestowed upon you, from your birth even

unto this day. They are great and numberless. May you not, indeed, say with me in tender gratitude: 'The Most High hath done great things for me'. And if He has done so much for you in the past, how much more will not this God of Goodness do for you in the future? The only way to thank Him worthily is through the Heart of Jesus, which has come down now, for this very purpose, into the hands of the priest upon the holy altar. Lovingly contemplate this Saviour God, thanking His Eternal Father for you: unite with the Saints and the angels; but, above all, remember that I too am there with you, and say unto God, all filled with holy joy:—

O my God, Who hast so tenderly loved me, Thou seest me before Thee, laden with the benefits, which, up to this day, Thou hast deigned to lavish upon me, and with those also, which it is Thy will to grant me in time and in eternity. I confess that Thy mercies to me are infinite; and yet I am ready to make Thee an adequate return for them. Yes, O Lord, this pure Host, this holy Host, this spotless Host, which I offer Thee by the hands of the

priest in union with Mary is sufficient, I know, to repay Thee for the gifts which Thou hast given me : being of infinite value, it is of itself equal to the good things which I have received at Thy hands, and which I hope to receive in the future. O ye angels of the Lord ! O blessed inhabitants of heaven ! O Holy Virgin, my Mother, deign to unite with me in thanking my God and in offering Him in return for His favors, all the Masses which shall be celebrated, to-day, throughout the whole world. Beseech Him to accept the desires of my heart, in union with the loving thanksgiving which Jesus Christ is offering for me now upon this altar.

“ Renew these acts, or others similar, as often as you please, but, be careful to unite them to those of my heart. The God of goodness will look upon you with complacency and joyfully receive the testimony of your affectionate gratitude.”

IV. FROM THE COMMUNION TO THE END OF MASS.

How to Ask for all the Graces of which you stand in need.

“ If you are not to receive sacramentally, be sure to do so spiritually. Frequent spiritual

communion produces in the soul a close union with Jesus Christ."

"Imagine, as some of My servants have done, that I am giving you the Infant Jesus, Who has just been born anew upon the altar. Enlarge your heart, for it is the Son of God who is coming to you, and Who will make intercession for you. Were I to assure you that I, myself, would carry your prayers to God, and would intercede for you, what sweet confidence would you not have of being heard! But it is Jesus Christ, true God and true man, Who is your Advocate, and Who is offering His own Precious Blood to His Eternal Father on your behalf."

"Be not content with asking only a few favours; imitate me, ask great graces for yourself and for the whole world. Say, then, with sentiments of the deepest humility, and, as it were, all lost in me:—"

O God of my heart, I acknowledge myself unworthy of Thy gifts: yes, I confess that, by reason of my innumerable sins, I do not deserve that Thou shouldst hear me. But I implore Thee to look upon the Face of Thy Christ; to behold this Divine Victim,

Whom Thou hast deigned to send down to earth for me, and Who upon this altar, in offering Thee His Body and His Blood, offers Thee at the same time His all-powerful intercession in my favour.

Deign to accept it, O Lord, and, in consideration of the merits of Jesus, grant me all the graces I need in order to work out my salvation. Mary, Mother of God ! Thou knowest my utter poverty, and thou art all-powerful with the Heart of Thy Son. Do thou obtain for me the pardon of my sins, the knowledge of myself, and a constant union with thee and with Jesus. And this is not enough, O tender Mother. Remembering the infinite dignity of our Divine Victim, I dare to ask for all virtues in an eminent degree, for everything necessary to make me truly holy, for all the wants of my neighbor, for the exaltation of Holy Church, the conversion of all sinners and unbelievers, and the deliverance of all the souls in Purgatory.

“ Ask with confidence, without fear of impoverishing Him Whose treasures are infinite. Ask for yourself, for your relations, for your benefactors ; for the Church, for the Pope, for the whole world ; ask with the

most lively confidence, and be assured that your prayers united with mine, and with those of Jesus will undoubtedly be heard."

"When Mass is over, make a short thanksgiving.. Then leave the Church, as if you were going down from Calvary."

"Before going to her dally duties, St. Monica used to leave her heart upon the Altar.. Do as she did, leave your heart there in adoration; and during the day, remember that it is there close to Jesus. This thought will give fervour to your soul, and make recollection easy."

**Manner of Practising this Devotion to
Our Lady when we receive Holy
Communion.**

I. BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION.

1. You must humble yourself most profoundly before God. 2. You must renounce your corrupt interior and your dispositions, however good your own self-love may make them look. 3. You must renew your consecration by saying, *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*—I am all thine, my dear Mistress, and all I have is thine. 4. You

must implore that good Mother to lend you her heart, in order that you may receive her divine Son there with her own perfect dispositions. You will represent to her that it touches her Son's glory to come into a heart so sullied and so inconstant as yours ; that it would surely lessen His glory and perhaps destroy it. But if she will only come and dwell with you, she can do so by the dominion which she has over all creatures ; and her divine Son will then be well received by her spotless heart *Deus in medio ejus, non commovebitur*. You will tell her with truth, that what you have given her of your own is very little to honour her ; but that by this Holy Communion you wish to make her the same present as the Eternal Father did, and that you will honour her more by this than if you gave her all the riches in the world ; and, finally, that Jesus, Who loves her alone, desires still to take His pleasure and His repose in her, even in your soul, though it be filthier and poorer than the stable, where He made no difficulty to come simply because she was there. You will ask her for her Heart in these tender words ; *Accipio te in mea omnia præbe mihi cor tuum, O Maria ?* " I take

Thee for my all, O Mary, lend me Thy Heart !”

II. AT HOLY COMMUNION.

When about to receive Holy Communion, after the *Pater Noster* you will say three times, *Domine non sum dignus*. The first time to the Eternal Father, telling Him that you are not worthy, because of your evil thoughts and ingritudes towards so good a Father, to receive His only Son; but that He is to behold Mary His handmaid—*ecce ancilla Domini*—who acts for us, and who gives us a singular confidence and hope with His Majesty, *Quoniam singulariter in spe constituisti me*. The second time to the Son: *Domine non sum dignus*; telling Him that you are not worthy to receive Him, because of your idle and evil words, and your unfaithfulness in His service; but that, nevertheless you pray Him to have pity upon you, that you wish to introduce Him into the house of His own Mother, and yours, and that you will not let Him go without His coming to lodge with her. *Tenui eum, nec dimittam donec introducam illum in domum matris meæ, et in cubiculum genitricis meæ*

(Cant. iii. 4). You will pray Him to rise, and come to the place of His repose and into the ark of His Sanctification : *Surge, Domine, in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ*. Tell Him you put no confidence at all in your own merits, your own strength and your own preparations, as Esau did : but that you trust only in Mary, your tender Mother, as the little Jacob trusted in Rebecca. Tell Him that, sinner and Esau as you are, you dare to approach His sanctity, supported and adorned as you are, with the virtues of His holy Mother.

The third time to the Holy Ghost *Domine non sum dignus* ; telling Him that you are not worthy to receive this masterpiece of His charity, because of the lukewarmness and iniquity of your actions, and because of your resistances to His inspirations ; but that all your confidence is in Mary, His faithful Spouse. You will say with St. Bernard, *Hæc mea maxima fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ*. You can pray even Him to come Himself in Mary, His Immaculate Spouse, telling Him that her bosom is as pure, and her heart as burning as ever ; and that without His descent into your soul, neither Jesus nor

Mary will be formed, nor yet worthily lodged.

III. AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

After Holy Communion, while you are inwardly recollected, and holding your eyes shut, you will introduce Jesus into the Heart of Mary. You will give Him to His Mother, who will receive Him lovingly, will enthrone Him honourably, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace Him closely, and will render to Him in spirit and in truth, many homages which are unknown to us in our thick darkness. Or you will keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus dwelling in Mary. Or you will sit like a slave at the gate of the king's palace, where He is speaking with the queen; and while they talk to each other without need of you, you will go in spirit to heaven and over all the earth, praying all creatures to adore, thank, and love Jesus and Mary in your place: *Venite, adoremus, Venite*. Or you will yourself ask of Jesus, in union with Mary, the coming of His Kingdom on earth, the gift of Divine Wisdom, or Divine love, the pardon of your sins, or any

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other grace, but always by Mary and in Mary, saying, while you look at yourself with contempt: *Ne respicias, Domine, peccata mea*: "Lord, look not on my sins;" *Sed oculi tui videant æquitates Mariæ*: "But let Thine eyes look on the virtues and merits of Mary;"—and then, remembering your sins, you will add: *Inimicus homo hoc fecit*: "It is I who have committed these sins;" or you may say, *Ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me*; or else, *Te oportet crescere, me autem minus*: "My Jesus, Thou must increase in my soul, and I must decrease; Mary, Thou must increase within me, and I must be still less than I have been". *Crescite et multiplicamini*:—"O Jesus and Mary, increase in me and multiply yourselves outside in others also."

There are many other thoughts which the Holy Ghost furnishes and will furnish you, if you are thoroughly interior, mortified, and faithful to the grand and sublime devotion which I have been teaching you. But always remember that the more you leave Mary to act in your Communion, the more Jesus will be glorified. The more you leave Mary to act for Jesus, and Jesus to act in Mary, the more profound-

ly will you humble yourself, listening to them in peace and silence, without troubling yourself about seeing, tasting, or feeling; for the just man ever lives by faith, and particularly in Holy Communion, which is an action of faith. *Justus meus ex fide vivit.*

**The Blessed De Montfort's Method of
Saying the Rosary.**

THE FIVE JOYFUL MYSTERIES.

Spirit of Holy Joy.

For Mondays and Thursdays throughout the year, the Sundays in Advent, and after Epiphany, until Lent.

1.—THE ANNUNCIATION.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honour of Thy Incarnation in the womb of Mary; and we ask of Thee, in this mystery, and through her intercession, *a most profound humility.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Annunciation dwell in our souls! Amen.

2.—THE VISITATION.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of the Visitation of Thy most holy Mother to her cousin St. Elizabeth, and the sanctification of St. John Baptist; and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *charity towards our neighbor.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Visitation dwell in our souls! Amen.

3.—THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Nativity in the stable of Bethlehem: and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *detachment from the things of earth, contempt of riches, and love of poverty.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Birth of Jesus dwell in our souls! Amen.

4.—PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Presentation in the temple and the Purification of Mary, and we ask of Thee in this mystery and through her intercession, *great purity of body and mind.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple dwell in our souls ! Amen.

5.—FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Finding in the Temple with the Doctors : and we ask of Thee in this mystery and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *true Wisdom.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Finding of Jesus in the Temple dwell in our souls ! Amen.

THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

Spirit of Compunction.

For Tuesday and Fridays throughout the year and the Sundays in Lent.

1.—THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Agony in the Garden of Olives, and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, *contrition for our sins.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Agony in the Garden dwell in our souls !
Amen.

2.—THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy bloody Scourging, and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *the spirit of penance and mortification.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Scourging at the Pillar dwell in our souls !
Amen.

3.—THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Crowning with thorns : and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *the grace of contempt for the world.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Crowning with Thorns dwell in our souls ! Amen.

4.—THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Carrying of the Cross, and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *patience under our crosses.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Carrying of the Cross dwell in our souls ! Amen.

5.—THE CRUCIFIXION.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy Crucifixion and Death on

Calvary : and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *the conversion of sinners and the relief of the souls in Purgatory.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Crucifixion dwell in our souls ! Amen.

THE FIVE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

Spirit of Adoration and Faith.

For Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the year, and the Sundays from Easter till Advent.

1.—THE RESURRECTION.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy glorious Resurrection : and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, *the Love of God and a spirit of Fervor.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Resurrection dwell in our souls! Amen

2.—THE ASCENSION.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of Thy triumphant Ascension, and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through Thy most glorious Name, *the virtue of hope, and an ardent desire of heaven, our true home.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Ascension dwell in our souls! Amen.

3.—THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and we ask of Thee in this mystery, and through Thy most glorious Name *an abundant share in the Gifts and Fruits of Thy Holy Spirit.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Descent of the Holy Ghost dwell in our souls! Amen.

4.—THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of the glorious Assumption of Thy Holy Mother into heaven; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through Her intercession, *a great love for Mary.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin dwell in our souls! Amen.

5.—THE CORONATION OF OUR LADY.

O Lord Jesus, we offer Thee this decade in honor of the Coronation of Thy Most Holy Mother; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through Her intercession, *perseverance in grace and a crown of glory in heaven.* Amen.

One Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory be to the Father.

May the grace of the mystery of the Coronation of our Lady dwell in our souls! Amen.

MAGNIFICAT.

MY soul doth magnify : the Lord.

And my spirit hath rejoiced : in God my Saviour.

Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid : for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For He that is mighty hath done great things for me : and holy is His name.

And His mercy is from generation to generation : to them that fear Him.

He hath showed might in His arm : He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things : and the rich He hath sent away empty.

He hath received Israel His servant ; being mindful of His mercy.

As He spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

MAGNIFICAT : * anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus : * in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ : * ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est : * et sanctum nomen ejus.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies : * timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo : * dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede : * et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis : * et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum : * recordatus misericordiæ suæ.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros : * Abraham et semini ejus in sæcula.

Gloria Patri, etc.

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in glori

Te Deum Laudamus.

TE Deum laudamus: * te
Dominum confitemur.

Te æternum Patrem * omnis
terra veneratur.

Tibi omnes angeli, * tibi
cæli, et universæ potestates:

Tibi cherubim et seraphim,*
incessabili voce proclamant:

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,*
Dominus Deus Sabaoth:

Pleni sunt cœli et terra,*
majestatis gloriæ tuæ.

Te gloriosus * Apostolorum
chorus.

Te Prophetarum * laudabilis
numerus.

Te Martyrum candidatus *
laudat exercitus.

Te per orbem terrarum *
sancta confitetur Ecclesia.

Patrem * immense majes-
tatis.

Venerandum tuum verum *
et unicum Filium.

Sanctum quoque * Paracli-
tum Spiritum.

Tu Rex gloriæ, * Christe.

Tu Patris * sempiternus es
Filius.

Tu ad liberandum suscep-
tus hominem, * non horruisti
Virginis uterum.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo, *
aperuisti credentibus regna
cælorum.

Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes,*
in gloria Patris.

Venerabile Thee, O God:
we acknowledge Thee
to be the Lord.

Thee, the Father everlasting:
all the earth doth worship.

To Thee all Angels: to
Thee the Heavens and all the
Powers:

To Thee the Cherubim and
Seraphim continually cry:

Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord
God of Hosts.

Heaven and earth are full:
of the majesty of Thy glory.

Thee the glorious choir: of
the Apostles,

Thee the admirable compa-
ny: of the Prophets.

Thee the white-robed army
of Martyrs: praise.

Thee the Holy Church
throughout the world: doth
acknowledge.

The Father: of infinite
Majesty.

Thine adorable, true: and
only Son.

Also the Holy Ghost: the
Paraclete.

Thou art the King of Glory:
O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting
Son: of the Father.

Thou, having taken upon
Thee to deliver man: didst not
abhor the Virgin's womb.

Thou, having overcome the
sting of death: didst open to
believers the kingdom of
heaven.

Thou sittest at the right hand
of God: in the glory of the
Father.

We believe that Thou shalt come: to be our Judge.

We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants: whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious Blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints: in glory everlasting

O Lord save Thy people: and bless Thine inheritance.

Govern them: and lift them up for ever.

Day by day: we bless Thee.

And we praise Thy name for ever: yea, for ever and ever.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day: to keep us without sin.

O Lord, have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us: as we have trusted in Thee.

O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

Judex crederis * esse venturus.

1 Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni, * quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

Æterna fac cum Sanctis tuis, * in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, * et benedic hæreditati tuæ.

Et rege eos, et extolle illos,* usque in æternum.

Per singulos dies * benedicimus te.

Et laudamus nomen tuum in sæculum, * et in sæculum sæculi.

Dignare, Domine, die isto,* sine peccato nos custodire.

Miserere nostri Domine, * miserere nostri.

Fiat misericordia tua Domine, super nos: * quemadmodum speravimus in te.

In te, Domine, speravi: * non confundar in æternum.

Veni Creator Spiritus.

COME, Holy Ghost, Creator, come,

From Thy bright, heavenly throne;

Come, take possession of our souls,

And make them all Thy own.

Thou Who are called the Paraclete,

VENI creator Spiritus,

Mentes tuorum visita,

Imple superna gratia,

Quæ tibi creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paracletus,

1 Here it is usual to kneel.

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Altissimi donum Dei,
Fons vivus, ignis, charitas,

Et spiritualis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere,

Digitus paternæ dexteræ,
Tu rite promissum Patris,

Sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus,

Infunde amorem cordibus,
Infirma nostri corporis

Virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius,

Pacemque dones protinus;
Ductore sic te prævio,

Vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem,

Nóscamus atque Filium,
Teque utriusque Spiritum

Credamus omni tempore.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Et Filio, qui a mortuis
Surrexit, ac Paraclito,
In sæculorum sæcula. Amen.

Best Gift of God above ;
The Living Spring, the Living
Fire,
Sweet Unction and True Love.

Thou Who art sevenfold in
Thy grace,
Finger of God's right hand ;
His promise, teaching little
ones
To speak and understand.

Oh ! guide our minds with
Thy blest light,
With love our hearts inflame ;
And with Thy strength which
ne'er decays,
Confirm our mortal frame.

Far from us drive our hellish
foe,
True peace unto us bring ;
And through all perils lead us
safe,
Beneath Thy Sacred wing.

Through Thee may we the
Father know ;
Through Thee th' Eternal Son,
And Thee, the Spirit of them
both :
Thrice blessed Three in One.
All glory to the Father be,
With His co-equal Son,
The like to Thee, great Para-
clete,
While endless ages run. Amen.

Out of Paschal Time.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Ejusque soli Filio,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Nunc et per omne sæculum. .
Amen.

Ave Maris Stella.

Hail, thou Star of ocean,
Portal of the sky !
Ever Virgin Mother
Of the Lord most high !

Oh ! by Gabriel's Ave,
Uttered long ago,
Eva's name reversing,
Stablish peace below.

Break the captive's fetters ;
Light on blindness pour ;
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a Mother ;
Offer Him our sighs,
Who for us Incarnate
Did not thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins !
To thy shelter take us :
Gentlest of the gentle !
Chaste and gentle make us.

Still, as on we journey,
Help our weak endeavor ;
Till with thee and Jesus
We rejoice forever.

Through the highest heaven,
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son, and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.

Ave, Maris Stella,
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper virgo,
Felix cœli porta.

Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore,
Funda nos in pace,
Mutans Evæ nomen.

Solve vincula reis
Profer lumen cæcis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

Monstra te esse Matrem,
Sumat per te preces
Qui pro nobis natus,
Tulit esse tuus.

Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos culpis salutos
Mites fac et castos.

Vitam præsta puram,
Iter para tutum ;
Ut videntes Jesum
Semper collætetur.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
Tribus honor unus. Amen.

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin,

Commonly called

The Litany of Loreto

KYRIE eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Christe audi nos.

Christe exaudi nos.

Pater de coelis Deus,
miserere nobis.

Fili Redemptor mundi
Deus, miserere nobis.

Spiritus Sancte Deus,
miserere nobis.

Sancta Trinitas, unus
Deus, miserere nobis

Sancta Maria,
Sancta Dei genitrix

Sancta virgo virgi-
num,

Mater Christi,
Mater divina gra-
tiae,

Mater purissima,
Mater castissima,

Mater inviolata,

Mater intemerata,

Mater amabilis,

Ora pro nobis.

LORD have mercy
on us.

Christ have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,
have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer
of the world, have mer-
cy on us.

God the Holy Ghost,
have mercy on us

Holy Trinity, one God,
have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,
Holy Mother of
God,

Holy Virgin of vir-
gins,

Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine
grace,

Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,
Mother most amia-
ble,

Pray for us.

Mother most admirable,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Saviour,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned.
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,

Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners.

Pray for us.

Mater admirabilis,
Mater Creatoris,
Mater Salvatoris,
Virgo prudentissima,
Virgo veneranda,
Virgo prædicanda,
Virgo potens,
Virgo clemens,
Virgo fidelis,
Speculum justitiæ,
Sedes sapientiæ,
Causa nostræ lætitiæ,
Vas spirituale,
Vas honorabile,
Vas insigne devotionis,
Rosa mystica,
Turris Davidica,
Turris eburnea,
Domus aurea,
Fœderis arca,

Janua cœli,
Stella matutina,
Salus infirmorum,
Refugium peccatorum,

Ora pro nobis.

Consolatrix afflicto-
rum,
Auxilium Christia-
norum,

Regina Angelorum,
Regina Patriarch-
arum,

Regina Propheta-
rum,

Regina Apostolo-
rum,

Regina Martyrum,
Regina Confesso-
rum,

Regina Virginum,
Regina Sanctorum
omnium,

Regina sine labe ori-
ginali concepta,

Regina sacratissimi
Rosarii

Agnus Dei, qui tollis
peccata mundi, parce
nobis, Domine.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis pec-
cata mundi, exaudi nos,
Domine.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis
peccata mundi, mise-
rere nobis.

Comforter of the af-
flicted
Help of Christians,

Queen of Angels,
Queen of Patriarchs,

Queen of Prophets,

Queen of Apostles,

Queen of Martyrs.
Queen of Confessors,

Queen of Virgins,
Queen of all Saints,

Queen conceived
without original
sin,

Queen of the most
holy Rosary,

Lamb of God, Who takest
away the sins of the
world, spare us, O
Lord.

Lamb of God Who takest
away the sins of the
world, graciously hear
us, O Lord

Lamb of God Who takest
away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.

Ora pro nobis.

Pray for us.

300 days' indulgence, each time. Plenary, on the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Purification and the Assumption. (V.P.) Pius VII., Sept. 30, 1817.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God ;

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray.

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ. Thy Son, was made known, by the message of an Angel may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection ; through the same Christ our Lord Amen.

INDULGENCED PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION.



Behold, O good and most sweet Jesus, I cast myself upon my knees before Thee, and with the utmost fervor of my soul, pray and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst deign impress upon my heart lively sentiments of Faith, Hope and Charity, true Contrition for my sins and a most firm purpose of amendment, whilst with great love and grief of soul I ponder within myself and mentally contemplate Thy five Wounds; having before my eyes the words which of old the prophet David applied to Thee, putting them in Thy mouth, O good Jesus: "They have pierced My hands and My feet; they have numbered all My bones." (Ps XXI, 17. 18)

Plenary Indulgence (P) if said before a Crucifix after Communion. Pius IX., July 31, 1858.

ANIMA CHRISTI.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me :
Body of Christ, save me :
Blood of Christ, inebriate me :
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me :
O good Jesus, hear me :
Within Thy wounds hide me :
Permit me not to be separated from Thee.
From the malignant enemy defend me :
In the hour of my death call me
And bid me come to Thee
That, with Thy saints, I may praise Thee.
For ever and ever. Amen.

300 days' indulgence, each time. 7 years, once a day, after Communion.

Plenary, once a month, if you have said it at least once every day. (V.P.) Pius IX., Jan. 25, 1868.

SUSCIPE.

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. Thou hast given me all that I am and all that I possess; I surrender it all to Thee that Thou mayest dispose of it according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will have no more to desire.

300 days' indulgence, once a day. Leo XIII., May 26, 1883.

Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like unto Thine!

300 days' indulgence, once a day. Pius IX., January 25, 1868.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE HAIL MARY.

Sing, oh sons of men, the story
Of the Rosary—proclaim
All its grandeur, all its glory ;
Sing the praise of Mary's Name.

REFRAIN.

By this ever-blessed "Ave"
God, in us, shall sin destroy ;
By this ever-blessed "Ave"
Grace and peace shall we enjoy.

Wondrous prayer, of wondrous beauty,
Wert thou known to any one,
Thee to say were joyous duty
From the dawn to set of sun.

Could I speak as speak the thunders
I would teach, in every place,
All its beauties, all its wonders,
To a sad and sinful race.

Angels, saints, the archangel's greeting
Sing, forevermore, on high ;
We, their words in faith repeating,
To their anthems make reply.

Hath a heretic its sweetness
Ever known, or ever proved ?
All its perfectness, completeness ?
Hath his heart by it been moved ?

'Constant truth, and solace bringing ;—
One by God predestinate
Never wearies "Ave," singing,
Never grows disconsolate.

Those who love not God, unspoken,
Leave this prayer ; or as of nought
Think of it ; and not as token
Of the great salvation wrought.

Soul predestinate, with gladness,
Still thy Rosary repeat :
Think to taste, amid earth's sadness,
Hidden manna, passing sweet.

Life is here, and full salvation,
Joy to thee shall it impart :
Jesus loves this salutation,
Wins it, too, His Mother's Heart.

Gabriel once, in homage bending,
Brought from highest heaven this word ;
God, to manhood condescending,
Stooped to us, when Mary heard :

Still Her Heart an "Ave" gaineth,
As of old, so, too, to-day ;
All Her pity it obtaineth ;
Is it much for us to say ?

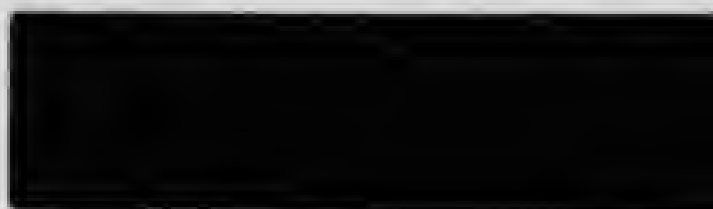
Joy therein she ever findeth
Joy that thrills Her through and through,
Joy whereby Herself She bindeth
All we ask of Her to do.

Lo ! This wondrous "Ave" maketh
Rich the souls whom God doth choose,
Them from grace to grace it taketh,
Strength from hour to hour renews.

Lo ! the barren earth, on hearing
Gabriel's "Ave," now shall bear
Fruit in season, plenteous, cheering ,
Growing fertile everywhere.

Surely shall this prayer all-holy
Draw The Spirit to renew
Jesus in His brethren lowly ;—
Such the work He fain would do.

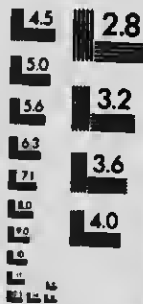
Lo ! This "Ave" it containeth
Many a great and wondrous charm ;
Victory over foes obtaineth,
Over all might work us harm.





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
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Even God, by sin offended,
Gladly listens to this prayer ;
By it shall His wrath be ended,
Changed into a Father's care.

When temptation round us rageth
"Ave" bids the tempest cease ;
"Ave" all our griefs assuageth,
Bringeth sweetest, perfect peace.

For the sinner it obtaineth
Grace, and pardon for his sin :
For the just man fervour gaineth,
Faith to presevere, to win.

It enflameth, light revealeth,
Nourisheth, and doth protect ;
Reassureth, gladdeneth, healeth,
Giveth strength to souls elect.

He who, oftentimes, and duly
Doth his Rosary recite
God will answer him most truly,
Put his ghostly foes to flight.

Thing that passeth comprehension :—
That one "Ave," rightly said,
Better is—without contention—
Than the whole wide world instead.

But, the grace that it containeth,
All its succour to obtain,
Say it well—or it remaineth
All unsaid, or said in vain.

“Ave”—once by Gabriel spoken—
Shall the sinner turn from sin
Pride by it at last be broken,
Errors it to truth shall win.

“Ave” said with true devotion,
Due attention, reverent love,
Setteth grace for us in motion ;
Merit gains for us above.

Lightly said—how could we ever
Dare it ?—Doubt not that it will
Bring thee grace and pardon never ;
Work thy soul a grievous ill.

Let him, who believes me, say it
Day by day, in ev'ry place,
God will certainly repay it
Richly, with abundant grace.

As for me, I still repeat it :
Mysteries of joy, of woe,
Glorious myst'ries, to complete it ;
For its power and help I know.

Daily, in my daily duty,
Joyful, or when ill at ease,
Peace or war ;—I learn its beauty,
Learn its gracious mysteries.

When my ghostly foes assail me
Courage, strength, to me it brings ;
Armour that shall never fail me,
Given by The King of kings.

Oft times have the world, the devil,
'Gainst my weary spirit fought,
Striven, in vain, to work me evil,
For the "Ave" succour brought.

Far from me, ye men of learning
Worldly, who in secret blame
This devotion beauteous ; spuming
All our love for Mary's Name.

Children of our Father, pray it ;
Members of The Christ Who died
To His Mother's honour say it,
By the Spirit sanctified.

Wouldst thou grow, as He hath bidden,
Perfect, in perfection's way ?
Mark this counsel, secret, hidden
—Say a Rosary ev'ry day.

Who so, faithful, persevering,
Liveth by such rule as this,
To his Model ever nearing ;
Shall attain the promised bliss.

REFRAIN.

By this ever-blessed "Ave,"
God, in us, shall conquer sin :
By this ever-blessed "Ave,"
Shall His reign be ushered in.

Practical Synopsis of this Devotion.

HABITUAL ASPIRATION : *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt.* I am all thine, sweet Mother ; all I am and all I have belongs to thee !

MORNING AND NIGHT : Piously kiss your medal, and the string by which it is held (looking upon it as the sensible sign of the spiritual chain which binds us to Mary), and say, with great fervour, your little act of consecration : *All I have is thine, dear Mother and all thou hast is mine !*

IN ALL YOUR ACTIONS (have this habitual thought) :

Sweet Mother, Act in me.

Pray in me.

Suffer in me.

Speak in me.

Work in me.

And thus with everything ; peacefully ; sweetly, without contention of mind ; but with fidelity and perseverance.

MEDITATION (in the Immaculate Heart of Mary). Dear Mother, I bring thee the three powers of my soul :

My memory.

My understanding.

My will.

Pray in me.

Be in my memory, to blot out every other thought but that of Jesus.

Be in my understanding, to banish therefrom all other knowledge. Be in my will, to destroy therein all other wills.

Dear Mother, consider with me the virtue I need most ; and the example of it which Jesus gives me.

FRUIT OF MEDITATION.

RECOLLECTION : profound ; habitual in Mary.

SUBMISSION : perfect ; *actual* ; to the inspirations of grace, so as to be able to say, at every moment, in union with Mary : *Ecce ancilla*. Behold the handmaid of the Lord !

HOLY MASS. (*Follow and imitate Mary*.) Dear Mother, lead me to Calvary. Offer me with Jesus. Teach me how to immolate myself, like thee, *with Jesus ; in Jesus ; as Jesus did*.

CONFESSION (*at the foot of the Cross, quite near the Blessed Virgin*.) Dear Mother, may thy heartfelt sorrow for sin, and thy lively horror of it take full possession of me !

May thy virginal purity and thy perfect fidelity destroy every thing evil, even to the slightest imperfection, in my soul !

COMMUNION. (*Unite with the dispositions of the Blessed Virgin*.) Dear Mother, give me my Jesus.

Lend me thy heart, and receive Him thyself in me.

Adore, love, solicit ; glorify Him for me.

Defend Him within me, cause Him to live ; to grow ; to rule and to act within me.

O tender Mother, extend His kingdom, and strengthen His reign in the hearts of all.

AT ALL TIMES : Forget everything but the sight of our loving Mother mercifully watching over us to keep us *in all things*, and *through all things*, closely united to Jesus.

Incline sweetly, but efficaciously—with her and like her—always to do what will be most agreeable to Our Lord ; in little things as in great things. (1)

Do your duty generously—without negligence or reserve—like a faithful servant—or a willing child, who never stops to examine things but lovingly obeys.

Take everything, whether from heaven or from earth, as coming to you direct from the Blessed Virgin. Give nothing, to God or to men without confiding it to Mary's virginal hands.

“Do this and thou shalt live !”

(1) We know God's will (and the B. Virgin's also, for she never had any other than God's) in these three ways :
1st. If there is the obligation of OBEEDIENCE to the law or to a superior.

2nd. If there is the obligation of CHARITY, to God, to our neighbor, or to ourselves, in regard to our perfection.

3rd. If, with nothing contrary to obedience and charity, there is necessity.

Circular Letter of Blessed Louis Marie de Montfort to the Friends of the Cross, written at Rennes during the latter part of July, 1714.

PREFACE.

On reading this epistle, one would think it had been written by St. Paul, so full of love is it for Jesus crucified. The writer, undoubtedly, received a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as did the great Apostle of Nations; and we know of no saint or writer in Christian times, who has more sublimely treated the noble and mysterious sufferings of Our Lord.

Read this solemn and touching instruction, and meditate on it. You will be penetrated and enraptured. It will give you a true idea of the profound knowledge, the thorough experience, and the eminent holiness of its author. In describing a true Friend of the Cross, Montfort reveals the sentiments of his own pure soul. The members of Trappist Communities make it one of their subjects of constant meditation, and find in it great consolation. They suggest it as suitable, for those who go there for a time to meditate in solitude.

He wrote this epistle under the following circumstances. Passing through Rennes towards the end of July, 1714, as if sent by Divine Providence to evangelize this large city, he asked the privilege of preaching the word of God in the various churches, but was refused. Forcèd to silence he conceived the idea of entering on a ten days'

retreat, and during this time he meditated on the sufferings of Our Lord on the Cross. On the last day of the retreat, he wrote the following beautiful epistle to the favored souls, whom he had associated together in the different places through which he passed, under the title of Friends of the Cross, and at the same time addressed the worldly minded, who followed a line of conduct directly opposed to his, and leading to perdition.

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE CROSS.

.....To-day, the last one of my retreat, I come out, so to speak, of the sweet retirement of my own interior, to trace upon paper a few arrows of the Cross, with which to pierce your hearts. Would to God, that I could sharpen them with the blood of my veins, instead of the ink of my pen ! But alas ! even were this required of me, I am too great a sinner. May, then, the Spirit of the Living God be, as it were, the life, the strength, the tenor of this letter. May His unction be, as it were, my ink, His divine Cross my pen, and your hearts my paper.

You have united together, Friends of the Cross, as so many soldiers, prepared for conflict with the world, not by flying away from it like monks and nuns, for fear of

being vanquished, but like valiant and brave warriors on the field of battle, without yielding a step or turning back. Courage, then, and fight valiantly! Unite yourselves together in a strong union of heart and mind, which will be infinitely stronger and more terrible to the world and hell, than the united forces of the kingdom to the enemies of the State. The devils are united for your destruction, be you united for their overthrow; the avaricious are united for the gain of gold and silver, be you united for the conquest of the treasures of eternity, which are enclosed in the cross; the licentious are united for pleasure, be you united for suffering. You are called the Friends of the Cross. How grand a title! I confess that I am charmed by it and dazzled. It is more brilliant than the sun, higher than the heavens, more glorious and full of majesty than the most magnificent titles of kings and emperors; it is the great title of Jesus Christ, True God and True Man; it is the unmistakable title of a Christian.

But if I am carried away by its splendour, I am not the less terrified by its importance. What indispensable and difficult obligations are contained in this name, and expressed by these words of the Holy Ghost: "A chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people." A Friend of the Cross is a man chosen by God out of ten thousand, who live according to sense and mere reason, to be a man, all divine, raised above reason,

and opposed in everything to sense, by the life and light of pure faith, and by a burning love for the Cross. A Friend of the Cross is an all-powerful king, and a hero who triumphs over the devil, the world, and the flesh, in their triple concupiscence. By the love of humiliation he overthrows the pride of Satan; by the love of poverty he triumphs over the avarice of the world; by the love of suffering he deadens the sensuality of the flesh. A Friend of the Cross is a holy man, separated from all things visible, whose heart is raised above all that is frail and perishable, whose conversation is in heaven, who passes upon earth for a stranger and a pilgrim, and who, without allowing his heart to rest upon it, regards it with indifference, and tramples it (with contempt) beneath his feet. A Friend of the Cross is an illustrious conquest of Jesus Christ, crucified upon Calvary, in union with His holy Mother; he is a Benoni or Benjamin, the "son of pain," the "son of the right hand," conceived in His sorrowing Heart, born into the world from His pierced right side, and all-empurpled with His Blood. Owing to his origin of blood, he can only breathe crosses, blood, and death to the world, the flesh, and sin, in order to be all hidden here below with Jesus Christ in God. Lastly, a perfect Friend of the Cross is a true "Christopher," or rather another Jesus Christ, so that he can say with truth, "*Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* —I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Are you, by your actions, my dear friends of the Cross, such as your great name implies, or, at least, have you a true desire and a true will to become so, by the grace of God, under the shadow of the Cross of Calvary and of our Lady of Pity? Are you taking the means necessary for this end? Have you entered into the true path of life, which is the strait and thorny way of Calvary? Are you not, without thinking of it, in the broad road of the world, which is the way of perdition? Do you know well, that there is a way which seemeth right and safe unto a man, but which leadeth unto death? Do you distinguish well the voice of God and of His grace, from that of the world and of nature? Do you hear well the voice of God, our good Father, Who, after having given His triple curse to all those who follow the concupiscences of the world, *væ, væ, væ habitantibus in terra*, cries lovingly to you, whilst He stretches out His arms, "*Separamini, popule meus*,"—be ye separated, my chosen people, dear Friends of the Cross of my Son, be ye separated from the worldly, who are accursed of My Majesty, excommunicated by My Son, and condemned by My Holy Spirit. Take heed that you 'walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the chair of pestilence.' Come ye out of the great and infamous Babylon, listen only to the voice, follow only in the footprints of My well-beloved Son, Whom I have given to be your Way, your Truth,

your Life, and your Model—“*ipsum audite*” ? Do you hear this loving Jesus, Who cries to you laden with His cross, “*Venite post me*. Come ye after Me ;—he that followeth me walketh not in darkness ; “*Confidite, ego vici mundum*,—have confidence, I have overcome the world.”

You see, my dear Brothers of the Fraternity, there are two sides or parties, which present themselves every day, that of Jesus Christ, and that of the world ; that of our loving Saviour is on the right hand as you mount up to heaven, by a narrow road, straitened more than ever by the corruption of the world. Our Good Master is at its head, marching barefoot, His head crowned with thorns, His body all bleeding and laden with a heavy cross ; there is only a handful of men to follow Him, although they are the bravest who do so, because His gentle voice is not heard amid the tumult of the world, and few there are who have the courage to follow Him in His poverty, His sufferings, His humiliations, and His other crosses, which we must needs bear in His service all the days of our life. On the left is the party of the world, or of the devil, and it is the most numerous, the most magnificent, and the most brilliant, at least in appearance. All the fashionable world are there, and great is the crowd, although the roads are broad, and widened more than ever by the multitude which pours through them like a torrent ; for the roads are strewn with flowers,

bordered by pleasures and amusements, covered with gold and silver.

On the right hand, the little flock which follows Jesus Christ, speaks only of tears, penances, prayers and contempt of the world; continually may you hear these words interrupted by sobs, "Let us suffer, let us weep, let us fast, let us pray, let us hide ourselves, let us humble ourselves, let us become poor, let us mortify ourselves; for he who has not the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of the Cross, is none of His; those who are Jesus Christ's have crucified their flesh with its concupiscences; we must be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, or be damned. "Courage!" they cry, "Courage! if God be for us, in us, and before us, who can be against us? He that is in us is stronger than he who is in the world; the servant is not greater than his master, a moment of light tribulation worketh an eternal weight of glory. There are fewer of the elect than men think; it is only the violent who take the kingdom of heaven by storm: no one shall be crowned who has not striven lawfully, according to the Gospel, and not according to the fashions of the world. Let us then fight bravely, let us run our course quickly, that we obtain our prize, that we gain our crown."

These are some of the words of God with which the Friends of the Cross mutually encourage one another. Wordlings, on the other hand, in order to encourage themselves in malice, without scruple, cry out

every day, "Life, life, peace, joy, joy! Let us eat, let us drink, let us sing, let us dance, let us play: God is good, God has not made us in order to damn us, God does not forbid us to amuse ourselves; we shall not be damned for that, no more scruples, then, *mortemini!*"

Bear in mind, my dear Brothers, that our good Jesus in looking at you now, and is saying to every one of you singly: "See how I am abandoned by almost the whole world in the royal road of the Cross: the blind idolaters mock at My Cross as a folly, the obstinate Jews are scandalized at it as an object of horror, heretics break it in pieces and cast it down, as a thing worthy of contempt: but, what is worse, (and I cannot tell you this without tears in my eyes, and sorrow in My heart.) My children, whom I have brought up on My bosom, and whom I have taught in My school, the members of My Body whom I have quickened with My Spirit, have abandoned and despised Me in becoming the enemies of My Cross, *Numquid et vos vultis abire?* Will you also go away and leave Me, by flying from My Cross like the worldlings, who in this are so many Antichrists, '*Antichristi multi?*' Will you, in order to conform to this present wicked world despise the poverty of My Cross in a race after riches, avoid the pain of My Cross in a search after pleasure, hate the humiliations of My Cross in an ambitious thirst for honours?

I have many apparent friends who protest that they love Me, and who, in reality,

hate Me, because they love not My Cross ; I have many friends at My table, and very few at My Cross."

To this loving appeal of Jesus, let us rise above ourselves ; let us not be seduced by our sensuality, as Eve was ; let us only look to the Author and End of our faith, Jesus Crucified ; let us fly the corruption of the concupiscence of a corrupted world ; let us love Jesus Christ in the proper way, that is to say, by following Him through all kinds of crosses. Let us meditate on those admirable words of our loving Master, which contain within them the whole perfection of the Christian life. "*Si quis vult venire post me, abneget seipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me.* — If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." All Christian perfection, indeed, consists in this : 1. To will to become a saint—"if any one will come after Me." 2. To renounce ourselves—"let him deny himself." 3. To suffer—"let him take up his cross." 4. To act—"and follow Me."

"*Si quis,* — if any one"—any one, not many a one, in order to mark the small number of the elect, who really have the will to conform to Jesus Christ crucified by carrying their cross. The number of the elect is so small, so small that were we to know how small it is, we should faint away from grief. It is so small that were God to assemble them together, He would cry to them as He did of old by the mouth of His Prophet : "*Congregamini unus et unus.*—

gather yourselves together, one by one, one from this province, one from that kingdom.”

“*Si quis vult*,”—if any one has a true will, an absolute will, a will determined not by nature or custom, or self-love, or interest, or human respect, but by the all-victorious grace of the Holy Ghost Who gives Himself not to every one.—*Non omnibus datum est nosse mysterium*. The knowledge of the mystery of the Cross is, in practice, given but to few. A man who would mount up Calvary and suffer himself to be laid upon the cross with Jesus, in the midst of his own country, must be a brave man, a hero, a determined man, a man raised up in God; he must tread under his feet as so much litter, the world and hell, his own body and his own will; he must be determined to leave everything, undertake everything, and suffer everything, for Jesus Christ. Know, dear Friends of the Cross, that those amongst you who have not this determination, are walking, so to speak, on one leg, are flying with one wing, and are not worthy to be of your number, because they are not worthy to be called Friends of the Cross, which we must have together with Jesus Christ, *corde magno et animo volenti*. A half-will of this kind is enough to spoil the whole flock, like a sheep that has the scab. If any such sheep has entered into your sheepfold, through the evil door of the world, in the name of Jesus Christ Crucified let it be chased away, as a wolf would be.

“*Si quis vult post me venire*”—if any one

will come after Me, Who am so humble and annihilated that I became as a worm and no man, "*ego sum vermis et non homo*;" after Me, Who came into the world for no other end but to embrace the cross, "*ecce venio*;" and to place it in the midst of My Heart, "*in medio cordis*;" and to love it from my youth upwards, "*hanc amavi a juventute mea*;" and to sigh after it my whole life long, "*quomodo co-arctor*;" and to carry it with joy, and to prefer it to all the joys and delights of heaven and earth, "*proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem*;" in a word, after Me Who was not satisfied until I died in its divine embrace."

If any one, then, will come after Me, thus annihilated and crucified, let him, like Me, glory only in the poverty, humillatous, and sufferings of My cross, "*abneget semetipsum*;" let him deny himself. Far from the company of the Friends of the Cross be those proud sufferers, those worldly wise, those great geniuses and strong minds who are self-opinionated and puffed up with their own lights and their own talents; far from here be those babblers, who make a great noise and bring forth no fruit but vanity; far from here be those proud devotees who hear about them everywhere the egotism of proud Lucifer, "*non sum sicut ceteri*;" who cannot suffer to be found fault with, without excusing themselves, or to be attacked without defending themselves, or to be humbled without exalting themselves! Take heed not to admit into your company those delicate and sensual men who dread

the least prick, and who cry out and complain at the least pain, who have never relished a hair-shirt or a discipline or other instrument of penance, and who mingle with their fashionable devotions a sort of plastered up and refined delicacy and want of mortification.

“*Tollat Cruceem Suam ;*” let him take up his cross : “*Suam,*” his own. Let him, let this man, (or that rare woman, “*de ultimis finibus pretium ejus,*” whom the whole earth from end to end could not purchase) take up with joy, embrace with burning zeal, and carry bravely on his shoulders his own cross, and not that of another ; his own cross, which by my wisdom I have made for him with “number, weight and measure :” his own cross, the four dimensions of which I have arranged with My own hand with great exactness. that is to say, its thickness, its length, its breadth and its depth ; his own cross which I have cut from a portion of that which I carried Myself on Calvary, out of the infinite love which I bore him ; his own cross, which is the richest present I can make to My elect on earth ; his own cross, composed in its thickness of the loss of goods, and humiliations, and contempt, and sorrows, and pain, and sickness, and spiritual suffering, which in My Providence must happen to him every day until his death ; his own cross, composed in its length of a certain number of months or days, during which he must be laden with calumny, or extended on a sick bed, or reduced to beggary, or become

a prey to temptations, dryness, desolation and other afflictions of the spirit ; his own cross, composed in its breadth of all the hardest and most bitter trials, whether on the part of friends, or of servants, or of relations ; his own cross, in a word, composed in its depth of most hidden sufferings with which I will afflict him, without his being able to find consolation in creatures who even, by My order, will turn their backs upon *him* and unite with Me, in order to make *him* suffer.

Tollat, let him take up—that is to say, let him not drag it along, or tremble under its burden, or lessen it, or hide it ; but let him carry it high in his hand, without impatience, or grief, without complaint, or voluntary murmuring, without sharing it with another, or looking to nature for relief, without shame or human respect. *Tollat*, let him place it on his forehead, and say with St. Paul : *Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in Cruce Domini Nostri Jesus Christi !* “ God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, my Master.” Let him carry it on his shoulders after the example of Jesus Christ, that this cross may become to him the weapon of his conquests, and the sceptre of his empire, *impertum principatus ejus super humerum ejus* ; “ and the government is upon his shoulder ;” in a word, let him place it in his heart by love, in order to make it a burning bush, burning night and day for the pure dove of God without consuming.

“*Crucem*,” the Cross, let him carry it, be-

cause there is nothing so needful and so useful, so sweet and so glorious, as to suffer something for Jesus Christ. And, indeed, dear friends of the Cross, you are all sinners; there is not one amongst you who does not deserve hell, and I more than any one. Our sins must be punished in this world, or in the next; if they are punished in this, they will not be punished in the next; if God punish them in this world and we agree to it, the punishment will be full of love; He will chastise us in His mercy which reigns in this world, and not in His justice: the chastisement will be light and momentary, accompanied with sweetness and merits, and followed by rewards both in time and in eternity. But if the chastisement necessary for the sins which we have committed be reserved for the next world, it will be the avenging justice of God Who tries everything by fire and blood, which will punish us! Terrible punishment! *horrendum!* unspeakable, incomprehensible! "*quis novit potestatem iræ ejus?* Who knoweth the power of His wrath?" Punishment without mercy, *judicium sine misericordia*, without pity, without relief, without merit, without limits, without end. Yes, without end; that mortal sin of a moment, which you have committed, that bad and voluntary thought which has escaped your memory, that word which the wind has carried away, that little action against the law of God, which lasted such a little while, will be punished for eternity, as long

as God is God, with the demons in hell ; and the God of vengeance will have no pity on your fearful torments, on your tears and groans, even though they be loud enough to rend the rocks. To suffer for ever and for ever, without merit, without mercy, and without end ! Do we think of this, my dear brothers and sisters, when we have to suffer some little pain in this world ? How fortunate, then, we are to make so happy an exchange of an eternal and unfruitful pain for, one that is passing and meritorious by carrying this cross with patience ! How many of our debts remain unpaid ! How many sins have we committed for the expiation of which, even after bitter contrition and sincere confession, we shall have to suffer in purgatory for centuries, because we have been content in this world with a few very light penances ! Ah ! let us pay in this world willingly, by carrying our cross well ; for, in the next world, even the last farthing is exacted, even an idle word must be expiated. If we could only snatch from the devil the book of death, in which he has marked all our sins and the punishment which is due to them, what an immense "sum total" we would find, and how delighted we should be to suffer whole years here below, rather than suffer for a single day in the world to come !

Do you not flatter yourselves, my friends of the Cross, that you are the friends of God, or wish to become so ? Make up your mind, then, to drink of the chalice, which

you must drink, if you would become the friends of God : *Calicem Domini biberunt, et amici Dei facti sunt.* The well-beloved Benjamin had the chalice, and his other brothers had only the corn ; the great favorite of Jesus Christ (St. John) had the Heart of Christ, and went up Mount Calvary, and drank of the chalice. *Potestis bibere calicem ?* It is good to desire the glory of God, but to desire and to pray for it, without wishing to suffer everything, is a folly and an extravagant prayer. *Nescitis quid petatis.... oportet per multas tribulationes ?—oportet,* we must, it is a necessity ; it is indispensable ; we must enter through many tribulations and crosses into the kingdom of God. It is with reason that you glory in being the sons of God, glory then in the scourgings which your good Father has given you and will give you for the future, for the good father chastises His children. If you are not of the number of His well-beloved sons, you are, Oh, what a misfortune ! what a thunderbolt ! you are, as St. Augustine says, of the number of the reprobate. He who mourns not in this world, as a pilgrim and a stranger, will never rejoice in another world as a citizen of heaven, says the same St. Augustine. If God the Father does not send you from time to time some good crosses, it is because He does not care for you, because He is angry with you ; because He looks upon you only as strangers outside His house, and no longer under His protection, or as bastard children, who, not

deserving to share their Father's heritage, deserve neither care nor correction.

Friends of the Cross, disciples of a crucified God, the mystery of the Cross is a mystery unknown to the Gentiles, rejected by the Jews, and despised by heretics and bad Catholics; but it is the great mystery which you must learn to practise in the school of Jesus Christ, and which you can only learn in His school. You will search in vain through all the academies of antiquity for one philosopher who taught it; you will consult in vain the light of sense and reason; it is only Jesus Christ who can teach you, and make you relish this mystery, by His victorious grace. Try, therefore, to become skilful in this supereminent science under so great a Master, and you will learn all other sciences as well, for all are eminently contained in this: it is our divine and mysterious theology, and our philosopher's stone, which changes, through patience, the cross into precious metals, the sharpest pain into delight, poverty into riches, the deepest humiliations into glory. He, amongst you, who knows best how to carry his cross, even though besides this he should not know even the first letters of the alphabet, is the most learned of you all. Hear what the great St. Paul says, who, on his return from the third heavens, where he learnt the mysteries which are hidden even from the angels, cries out that he knows nothing and wishes to know nothing but Jesus Crucified. Rejoice, then, thou poor simple man, or thou poor woman with-

out intellect or learning ; if thou knowest how to suffer joyfully, thou wilt know more than a doctor of the Sorbonne, who does not know how to suffer as well as thou ! You are all members of Jesus Christ, what an honor ! But as such, what a necessity for suffering ! The Head is crowned with thorns, shall the member be crowned with roses ? The Head is buffeted and covered with dirt on the road to Calvary, shall the member be covered with perfumes, and sit upon a throne ? The Head has no pillow on which to rest, shall the members repose upon down and feathers ? It would be a monstrous, unheard-of thing ! No, no, dear companions of the Cross, be not deceived ; those Christians whom you see on all sides, fashionably adorned, tender to themselves, dignified and important to excess, are not the true disciples—not the true members of Jesus Crucified : you would wrong your Head Who is crowned with thorns, and the truth of the Gospel, by believing the contrary. O my God ! what phantoms of Christians, who believe themselves to be the members of the Saviour, and who are all the while His most treacherous persecutors ; because, whilst with their hand they make the Sign of the Cross in their heart they are the enemies of the Cross ! If you are led by the same spirit, if you live the same life as Jesus Christ, your thorn-crowned Head, you must expect only thorns, scourgings, nails,—in a word, you must look only for the cross, because the disciple must be treated as his Master, and

the member as its Head ; and if God offered for your choice, as He offered to St. Catherine of Sienna, a crown of thorns, and a crown of roses, choose with her and without hesitating, the crown of thorns, and press it down upon your head that you may resemble Jesus Christ.

You are not ignorant that you are the living temple of the Holy Ghost, and that you are to be placed as so many living stones, by the God of love, in the building of the heavenly Jerusalem ; you must expect then to be hewn, and cut, and chiseled with the hammer and chisel of the cross ; otherwise you will remain as rough stones, which are good for nothing, but to be despised and thrown away. Take heed not to wince under the hammer which strikes you, and have an eye to the chisel which cuts you, and to the hand which shapes you. It may be that the skilful and loving Architect wishes to make of you the chief stones of His eternal edifice, and the fairest statues in His kingdom. Let Him, then, do it ; He loves you, He knows what He is doing, He has had experience ; all His blows are skilful, and straight, and loving ; He never misses, unless you cause Him to do so by your impatience. The Holy Ghost compares the cross at one time to a winnowing fan, which clears the good grain from the straw and dust ; suffer yourselves, then, without resistance, like the grain before the winnowing fan, to be tossed about and shaken ; it is the Good Householder Who is winnowing, and you will soon be in His

garner. At another time He likens it to a fire which takes away the rust from the iron by the keenness of its flames; our God is a consuming fire, Who dwells in a soul by the Cross in order to purify it, without consuming it, as of old in the burning bush; then again He likens it to the crucible of a forge, in which the pure gold is refined, and the false gold vanishes in smoke, the good by undergoing steadily the trial of fire; the false by rising up in smoke against the flames; it is in the crucible of tribulation and temptation that the true friends of the cross are purified by their patience, whilst their enemies pass away in smoke by their impatience and their murmurs.

Look, my dear friends of the Cross, look before you at the great crowd of witnesses, who prove, without saying a word, the truth of what I am saying to you. Look at these just men—Abel, who was slain by his brother; Abraham, who was a stranger in the land; Lot, who was driven from his country; Jacob, who was personated by his brother; Tobias, who was struck blind; Job, who was reduced to poverty, humbled and covered with sores from head to foot. Look at so many apostles and martyrs who shed their blood; so many virgins and confessors, poor, humbled, exiled, oppressed, who all cry out with St. Paul, "Look at Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith;" that faith which we had in Him and in His cross, for He Himself had to enter through His cross into His

glory. See the swords of sorrow that pierced through the tender and innocent Heart of Mary, who had never known sin, either original or actual. Oh, how much I could say about the Passion of both, in order to show that what we have to suffer is as nothing, compared with what they suffered! After their sufferings, which of us dare exempt himself from carrying his cross? Which of us will not fly swiftly to the place where he knows that the cross awaits him? Which of us will not cry out with St. Ignatius, martyr: "Let fire and gibbet, and wild beasts, and all the torments of the devil come down upon me, if only I may possess Jesus Christ."

Now, if you will not suffer patiently and carry your cross with resignation, like the predestinate, you will have to carry it with murmuring and impatience, like the reprobate; you will be like those two animals which dragged the ark of the covenant, "lowing as they went;" you will imitate Simon of Cyrene, who put his hand to the very Cross of Jesus Christ in spite of himself, and did nothing but murmur whilst he carried it. It will happen to you, in a word, as it happened to the bad thief, who from the height of his cross fell into the depths of the abyss. No, no, this accursed earth on which we live cannot make us happy; we cannot see clearly in this land of darkness; there is no perfect peace on this stormy sea; we are never without combats in this place of temptation and on this field of battle; we are never without

wounds on this earth covered with thorns ; on it both the predestinate and the reprobate must carry their cross either willingly or unwillingly. Keep in mind these four lines :

“Three crosses stand on Calvary's saving height,
; Make thou thy choice, and see thou choose aright,
With Christ the Holy One, or His repentant thief.
Not with the lost one in his endless grief.”

That is to say, if you will not suffer joyfully, like Jesus Christ, or patiently like the good thief, you will have to suffer in spite of yourself, like the bad thief : you will have to drink the bitter chalice, even to the dregs, without any consolation from grace, and you will have to carry the whole weight of your cross, without any powerful aid from Jesus Christ. You will even have to bear the fatal weight which the devil will add to your cross, by the impatience into which it will throw you, and after leading a wretched life on earth with the bad thief, you will live with him forever in the flames of hell.

But if, on the other hand, you suffer as you ought to suffer, the cross will become a sweet and light yoke, which Jesus Christ will carry with you ; it will become the two wings of the soul to enable it to fly to heaven ; it will become the mast of a ship, that will carry you happily and easily into the harbour of salvation. Carry your cross patiently, and you will be enlightened in your spiritual darkness ; for he who has not been tempted, knows nothing. Carry your cross joyfully, and you will be inflamed

with divine love ; for no one lives without suffering, in the pure love of the Savior. Roses are only gathered among thorns ; the cross alone is the fuel of the love of God, as wood is of fire. Bear in mind, then, that beautiful sentence of the "Following of Christ : " "In proportion as thou dost violence to thyself, the greater progress wilt thou make in the love of God."

Look for nothing great from those feeble and indolent souls who refuse the cross when it meets them, and who never of their own accord,—with prudence, go in search of crosses for themselves ; they are, as it were, untilled ground which will yield only thorns, because it has not been dug or broken or stirred by a prudent labourer ; they are but stagnant water, which is good neither for washing nor drinking. Carry your cross joyfully, and you will find in it a strength of victory, which none of your enemies will be able to resist, a relish of charming sweetness, to which nothing else can be compared. Yes, my brothers, know that the true Paradise upon earth is to suffer something for Jesus Christ. Ask all the Saints, and they will tell you that they never tasted so delicious a banquet for the soul, as when they suffered the greatest torments. "Let all the torments of the devil come down upon me," said St. Ignatius, martyr. "*Aut pati aut mori,*" said St. Teresa. "*Non mori sed pati,*" said St. Magdalen of Pazzi. "To suffer and to be despised for Thy sake," said St. John of the Cross ; and how many

others have held the same language, as we read in their lives. Take God at His word, my dear brothers ; when we suffer joyfully for God, the cross, says the Holy Ghost, is the object of all kinds of joy for all kinds of persons. The joy of the cross is greater than that of a poor man, who is laden with all kinds of riches ; than that of a peasant who is raised to the throne ; than that of a merchant who gains millions of money ; than that of great generals, who gain many victories ; than that of captives when delivered from their chains ;—in a word, imagine all the greatest joys on earth, and yet the joy of one who is crucified and suffers much, contains them all and surpasses them all.

Rejoice then, aye, leap for joy, when God gives you a share in some good cross, for all that is greatest in heaven, and even in God, falls upon you, without your knowledge. Oh, what a great gift of God is the cross ! If you understood it, you would have masses said, you would make novenas at holy shrines, you would undertake long and painful pilgrimages, as the Saints have done, to obtain this divine gift. The world calls it madness, disgrace, folly, indiscretion, imprudence ; let these poor blind men say what they like ; their blindness which makes them look upon the cross from a human point of view, and all awry, becomes a part of our glory, every time that they procure for us crosses by their contempt and their persecutions ; by treating us thus, they give us jewels, they

place us on a throne, they crown us with laurels, what do I say? "All the riches, all the honors, all the sceptres, all the crowns of kings and emperors are not to be compared to the joy of the cross," says St. John Chrysostom; "It surpasses the glory of an apostle and evangelist. Willingly would I leave heaven," says this holy man, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, "to suffer for the God of Heaven. I would prefer a dungeon and a prison to the thrones of the empyrean. I do not envy even the glory of the seraphim as much as the greatest crosses. I esteem the gift of miracles, by which the devils are subdued, the elements shaken, the sun stopped in its course, the dead raised to life, far less than the honor of suffering for Christ. St. Peter and St. Paul are more glorious in their dungeon, with their chains upon their feet, than when they were raised to the third heaven, or received the keys of Paradise. And, indeed, is it not the cross which has given to Jesus Christ "a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth?"

The glory of a person who suffers much is so great, that heaven and the angels, and men and even the God of heaven, contemplate it with joy, as a most glorious spectacle; and if the saints could desire anything, it would be to return on earth and bear the cross. But if this glory is so great even on earth, what then will be the

glory of the cross in heaven ? Who can explain, or understand the eternal weight of glory, which a single moment in which the cross is well carried, worketh in us ? Who can understand the glory which a year, or sometimes a whole life, of crosses and sufferings worketh in heaven ? Assuredly, my dear friends of the Cross, heaven is preparing for you something great, as you are told by a great saint, because the Holy Ghost unites you so closely together in that, from which the whole world flies away with so much care. Assuredly, God wishes to make as many saints, as there are men and women amongst you, who are friends of the Cross, if you are faithful to your vocation, if you carry your cross as you ought, as Jesus Christ has carried it.

But it is not enough to suffer. The devil and the world have their martyrs, but we must suffer and carry our cross in the foot-prints of Jesus Christ; *sequatur me*, "let him follow Me," that is to say, we must carry the cross as He carried it, and here are the rules for doing so, which you must keep :

1. Never make crosses for yourselves purposely, or through your own fault. We must not do evil that good may come ; we must not, without special inspiration, do things badly, in order to draw down upon us the contempt of men ; we should rather imitate Jesus Christ, of whom it was said that "He did all things well," not out of self-love or vanity, but to please God and to edify our neighbour. But in discharg-

ing your duties in the best manner you are able, you will not fail to meet with contradictions and persecutions, and contempt, which God in His providence will send you against your will, and without your option.

2. If, by performing some indifferent action, your neighbor is scandalized, though without reason, refrain from it out of charity, so as not to scandalize little ones; and the heroic act of charity which you thus perform, will be worth more than that which you were doing or wished to do. If, however, the good which you are doing is necessary or useful to your neighbor, and some pharisee or evil-minded person take scandal without reason, then consult some prudent person, in order to know whether what you are doing be really necessary and useful to the generality of your neighbors; and if he judge it to be so, continue it, and let men say what they like, provided they let you do it, simply answering as Our Lord answered certain of His disciples who came to tell Him that the Scribes and Pharisees were scandalized at His words: "Let them alone, they are blind."

3. Although some saints and great men have prayed for, gone in search of, and even procured by ridiculous actions, crosses, contempt, and humiliations, let us simply adore and admire the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost in their souls, and let us humble ourselves at the sight of so-sublime a virtue, without daring to fly so high, being in comparison with these

swift eagles and roaring lions, but as poor hens with drenched plumage, or as dead dogs.

4. You may, however, indeed, you ought to pray for the wisdom of the cross, which is a saving and experimental knowledge of the truth, which causes us to see by the light of faith, the most hidden mysteries, amongst others that of the cross, a gift which is only obtained after great labour, profound humiliations, and fervent prayers. If you have need of that spirit of wisdom, which bears the heaviest crosses with courage, of that good and sweet spirit, which gives a relish, in the superior part of the soul, to the most disagreeable bitternesses, of that sound and right spirit, which seeks God alone, of that knowledge of the Cross, which contains all things in itself,—in a word, of that infinite treasure, the good use of which renders a soul partaker of the friendship of God, pray for it,—pray for it unceasingly and with energy, without hesitation, without doubt, and you will surely obtain it. Then you will see clearly, by your own experience, how it happened that the cross is something to be desired, sought after, and relished.

5. When, through ignorance, or even through your own fault, you have made some mistake which brings you a cross, humble yourselves thereat, under the powerful hand of God, without troubling yourselves about it, and say for example, from your heart, "*See, O Lord, another trick of my trade ;*" and if there has been any sin in the

fault which you have committed, take the humiliation which arises from it, as its punishment; and if there has been no sin, as a penance for your pride. Often, and indeed very often, God permits His greatest servants, who are highest in His grace, to fall into very humiliating faults, in order to humble them in their own eyes, and before men, and to take away from them the sight and thought of the graces He has bestowed upon them, and of the good which they are doing, so that "no flesh," as the Holy Ghost says, "may glory before God."

6. Be well convinced that all in us has been wholly corrupted through the sin of Adam, and through our own actual sins, not only the senses of our body, but all the powers of our soul; and that as soon as our corrupt mind regards any gift of God within us, reflecting on it, and taking pleasure in the reflection, then, that gift or grace of God becomes all soiled and corrupt, and God turns His divine eyes away from it. If the looks and thoughts of the mind of man spoil in this manner the best actions and the most divine gifts, what shall we say of the acts of the natural will, which are still more corrupt than those of the mind?

After that, we must not be astonished if God takes pleasure in hiding His own in the secrecy of His countenance, that they may not be soiled by the looks of men and by their natural knowledge; and to hide them thus, what does not a jealous God permit, and what does He not do? How

many humiliations will He not procure for them? Into how many faults will He not allow them to fall? By how many temptations will He not suffer them to be attacked, as He did to St. Paul? In what uncertainty, darkness, perplexity, does He not leave them? Oh, how wonderful is God in His saints, and in the ways by which He leads them to humility and sanctity!

7. Beware of believing, like proud devotees who are full of themselves, that your crosses are great, that they are trials of your identity, and proofs of a singular love of God in your behalf. This source of spiritual pride is very subtle and delicate, but is full of poison. You ought to believe:—1. That your pride makes you mistake straws for beams, scratches for wounds, a rat for an elephant, a little word in passing, a mere nothing at all, for a dreadful injury and a cruel treason. 2. That the crosses which God sends you are rather loving punishments of your sins, as indeed they are, than marks of special favour. 3. That whatever cross or whatever humiliation He may send you, He still spares you to an infinite degree, when you consider the number and enormity of your crimes, which you ought only to look at through the holiness of God, which suffers nothing impure, and which you have attacked in the person of a dying God, loaded with suffering by reason of your sins, and in presence of an eternal hell, which you have deserved a thousand, and perhaps a hundred thousand times. 4. That in the patience with which you suffer,

you are mixing up far more of the human and the natural than you think : for example, those little contrivances of human nature ; that secret seeking after consolation ; those natural disclosures of the heart to your friends, perhaps even to your director ; those excuses so finely drawn, and so ready ; those complaints, or rather I should say that detraction, so well turned, and so charitably spoken, of those who have wronged you ; that constant recurrence to your misfortunes, and the subtle complacency you take in them ; that belief, worthy of Lucifer, that you are really something great. I should never have done, were I to describe all the ins and outs, the turns and windings, of nature, even in suffering. 8. Draw profit and even advantage from little sufferings as well as from great. God does not look so much at the suffering as at the way in which we suffer. To suffer much, and to suffer badly, is the suffering of the damned ; to suffer much, and with courage, but for a bad cause, is the suffering of one of the devil's martyrs ; to suffer little or much, and to suffer it for God, is to suffer as a saint. If it were true to say that we can make choice of crosses, it is especially those which are little and obscure, compared with those which are great and notable, that we should choose. Nature in its pride may pray for, seek after, and even choose and embrace, great and notable crosses : but to choose and joyfully carry small and obscure crosses, this can only be the effect of a great grace, and of great fidelity

to God. Act, then, as the merchant acts in his counting house. Try to make profit out of everything : try not to lose the least particle of the true cross, were it only the prick of a pin or a fly, some little contradiction on the part of a neighbor, some little wrong done by mistake, some trifling loss of money, some little trouble of the soul, some little weakness of body, some little pain in the limbs.

Make profit out of everything, like the shop-keeper in his shop, and you will soon become rich in God, as he becomes rich in money, adding penny upon penny at his counter. Whenever you are crossed in the least way, say : "Blessed be God ; my God, I thank Thee !" And then hide in the memory of God, which is, as it were, your counter, the cross which you have just gained and afterwards think no more about it, except to say : "Thanks be to God, or "God be merciful to me !"

9. When you are told to love the cross, it is not meant that you should feel a sensible love which is impossible to nature ; you must distinguish three kinds of love ; sensible love, rational love, and faithful and supreme love ; or, in other words, the love of the lower part of man, which is the flesh ; the love of the higher part, which is the mind ; and the love of the highest part of all, the supreme point of the soul, which is the understanding enlightened by faith. God does not ask of you to love the cross with the desire of the flesh ; for this is wholly corrupt and criminal, everything

proceeding from it is corrupt, and it cannot be even subjected by itself to the Will of God, and to His crucifying Law. This is why our Lord, speaking of it in the Garden of Olives, cried out : " My Father, not My will but Thine be done." If the lower part of the man in Jesus Christ, although it was holy, was unable to love the cross without some interruption, how much more will our lower part, being altogether corrupt, resist it. We may indeed sometimes experience even sensible joy when we suffer, as many of the saints have done : but this joy comes not from the flesh, although it is in the flesh ; it comes from the higher part, which is so filled with this divine joy of the Holy Ghost, that it causes it to overflow upon the lower part ; so that, at that moment, even the most crucified of men may say : " My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God ! " There is another love of the cross, which I call of the reason, or rational love, and which is in the upper part of man ; this love is altogether spiritual, and as it springs from the knowledge of the happiness of suffering for God, it is perceptible and even perceived by the soul, which is inwardly rejoiced by it and strengthened. But this rational and even perceptible love, although good and very good, is not always necessary, in order to suffer joyously and divinely. This is why there is another love of the supreme point of the soul, as the masters of the spiritual life tell us, or of the understanding, as the philosophers say, by which, without feeling any joy in the senses, without perceiving

any rational love in the soul, we love, notwithstanding, and relish by the light of pure faith the cross which we carry, although it often happens that our lower part is in a state of war and alarm, and that it groans, and complains, and mourns, and tries to comfort itself by saying with Jesus Christ, "My Father, not My will, but Thine be done;" or with the Holy Virgin: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word." It is with one of these two loves of the higher part of the soul that we must love and relish the cross.

10. Make up your minds, then, dear Friends of the Cross, to suffer all sorts of crosses, without exception and without choosing; all poverty, all injustice, all loss, all sickness, all humiliation, all contradiction, all calumny, all dryness, all desolation, all interior and exterior pain, saying always: "My heart is ready, O my God, my heart is ready." Prepare, then, to be forsaken by men and angels, and like God Himself, to be persecuted, envied, betrayed, calumniated, discredited, and abandoned by all; to suffer hunger, thirst, beggary, nakedness, banishment, prison, the gibbet, and every kind of punishment, although you have not deserved them for the crimes which are laid to your charge. Lastly, imagine that, after having lost your property and your honour, after having been turned out of your house, like Job, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, you are, like St. Elizabeth, cast into the mud, or, like Job, thrown upon

a dunghill, stinking and covered with ulcers, without even a piece of linen to cover your sores or a morsel of bread to eat, which would not be refused to a horse or dog; and that with all these extreme evils, God should leave you a prey to all the temptations of the devils, without pouring into your soul the least sensible consolation. Believe firmly, that this would be the summit of divine glory and of true happiness, for a perfect Friend of the Cross.

11. In order to help you to suffer well, form a holy habit of considering four things:—First, the Eye of God, who, like a great king, from a high tower, looks down with complacency on his soldier, engaged in battle, and encourages him with words of praise. What is it that God regards on earth? Is it kings and emperors on their thrones? He looks on them often with contempt. Great victories of the armies of the State, precious stones, anything, in a word, which is great in the eyes of men? That which is great in the eyes of men is an abomination before God. What, then, is it that He regards with pleasure and complacency, and of which He seeks news from the angels and even from the devils? It is a man who fights for God, with fortune, with the world, with hell, and with himself, a man who carries his cross joyfully. Hast thou not seen upon the earth a great marvel, which all heaven is looking at with wonder, said the Lord to Satan: "Hast thou not seen My servant Job, who suffers for Me?"

Secondly, consider the Hand of this powerful Lord, who sends to us all natural evils, from the greatest down to the least. The same Hand which has laid low an army of a hundred thousand men, causes the leaf to fall from the tree, and the hair from your head: the Hand which touched Job so cruelly touches you gently, by the evil which it sends you. By the same Hand He forms day and night, light and darkness, good and evil; He has permitted the sins which give you annoyance, not that He has created evil, but that He permits its action. Thus, when you meet with some Semei who reviles you, and throws stones at you, as happened to King David, say to yourselves, "Let us not avenge ourselves; let him alone, for the Lord has bid him act thus." Let each one of you say, "I know that I have deserved all sorts of outrages, and it is with justice that God punishes me. Stay, O my arms, and strike not; and thou, O my tongue, say not a word; for this man or woman who reviles me or wrongs me, is an ambassador from God, who comes on the part of His mercy to take loving vengeance on my sins." Say one to another, "Let us not irritate His justice, by usurping the rights of His vengeance; let us not despise His mercy, by resisting His loving scourging, lest that mercy keep us in reserve for the vengeance of His pure justice in eternity." Consider how, with one hand, an all-powerful, and infinitely prudent God bears you up, whilst He strikes you with the other; with one hand He mor-

tifies, with the other He quickens ; He bringeth low and He raiseth up, and with both His arms He reaches from one end of your life to the other, "sweetly and mightily." Sweetly, by not permitting you to be tempted or afflicted above your strength ; mightily, by assisting you with powerful grace, which corresponds to the strength and duration of the temptation and affliction ; mightily, again, by becoming Himself, as He declares through His hoily Church, your support on the brink of the precipice near which you are, your companion on the road from which you are wandering, your shade in the heat which is burning you up, your covering in the rain which is drenching you and in the cold which is freezing you, your chariot in the weariness which is oppressing you, your help in adversity, your staff in the sipperry way, and your harbor in the midst of ruin and shipwreck.

Thirdly, consider the wounds and sufferings of Jesus Christ Crucified. He says to you Himself : " O all ye that pass by this way, the thorny way of the Cross, by which I passed, look and see ; look even with the eye of your body, and see with the eye of contemplation, if your poverty, your nakedness, your being despised, your sufferings, your abandonment, are like unto Mine ; look at Me, the Innocent One, and mourn, ye who are guilty ! " The Holy Ghost, through the mouth of the apostles, requires of us, to look in this way at Jesus Christ Crucified ; He commands us to arm ourselves with this thought, which is more

piercing and more terrible to our enemies than all other weapons. When you are attacked by poverty, abjection, suffering, temptation, or other crosses, arm yourselves with a buckler, a cuirass, a helmet and a two-edged sword; that is to say, with the thought of Jesus Christ and Him crucified; in Him you will find the solution of every difficulty, the victory over every enemy.

Fourthly, look *on high*, at the bright crown which is awaiting you in heaven, if you carry your cross well. This was what kept up the faith of the patriarchs and prophets in their persecutions, what encouraged the apostles and martyrs in their labours and torments. "We would rather," said the patriarchs with Moses, "we would rather be afflicted with the people of God than have the pleasures of sin for a time." "We suffer great persecutions on account of the reward," said the prophets with David. "We are, as it were, men appointed to death; we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, by our sufferings, being made the offscouring of the world," said the apostles and martyrs with St. Paul, "by reason of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which this momentary and light tribulation worketh in us." "Let us lift up our eyes to the angels above our heads, who cry to us". Beware of losing the crown assigned to the cross which has been given you. If you do not bear it well, another will do so and will carry off

your crown." "Fight bravely, by suffering patiently," say all the Saints to us, "and you will receive an eternal kingdom." Lastly, let us listen to Jesus Christ Who says to us: "To him that shall suffer and overcome through patience, will I give My reward." Let us look *below*, to the place which we deserve, and which is waiting for us in hell, with the bad thief and the reprobate, if we suffer like them in murmuring, full of spite and vengeance. Let us cry out with St. Augustine, "Burn and cut, O Lord, in this world, in punishment of my sins, provided Thou pardon them in eternity.

12. Never, of your own free will, complain of, or murmur at, the creatures of which God makes use to afflict you. Distinguish, therefore, between three kinds of complaint in misfortune. The first is involuntary and natural; it is that of the body, which groans, and sighs, and complains, and weeps, and laments. When the soul, as I have said, is resigned to the Will of God in its higher part, there is no sin. The second is that of the reason: it is when we complain and make known our misfortune to those who may be able to remedy it, as to a superior or a physician; this kind of complaint may be imperfect, if too eagerly made, but it is not sin. The third kind is sinful; it is when we complain of our neighbor in order to rid ourselves of the evil which he makes us suffer, or to avenge ourselves, or when we complain of the pain which we are suffering, consenting to

this complaint and adding to it impatience and murmuring.

13. Never receive any cross without kissing it humbly out of gratitude ; and when God, Who is all good, shall have favored you with some cross greater than usual, thank Him for it in a special manner, and try to get others to thank Him for it as well, in imitation of that poor woman, who having lost her all, through an unjust lawsuit which had been brought against her, caused a Mass to be said, with the few cents she had left in order to thank God for the good fortune He had sent her.

14. If you wish to render yourself worthy of receiving the crosses which may come to you without your participation, and which are the best of all, take upon yourself some voluntary ones, under the advice of a good director. For example, have you in your possession some piece of useless furniture to which you feel attached ? Give it to the poor, and say to yourself : " Shall we keep what is superfluous, when Jesus is so poor ? " Do you dislike some kind of food, some unpleasant odor, some particular act of virtue ? Taste, smell, practise, conquer yourself. Do you love some person or some object too tenderly, too eagerly ? Keep away, deprive yourself of that which pleases you. Have you a natural inclination to see, or to act, or to show yourself, or to go to any place ? Curb your desire, be silent, hide yourself, turn away your eyes. Have you a natural dislike for any person or thing ? Go to that

person, take that thing, overcome yourself. If you are truly Friends of the Cross, love, which is always ingenious, will enable you to discover, in this way, a thousand little crosses, with which you may unconsciously enrich yourselves, without fear of vanity, which often mixes itself up with the patience with which more remarkable crosses are endured ; and then, because you will have been faithful over few things, our Lord, as He has promised, will place you over many things, that is to say, over many graces, which He will give you, over many crosses which He will send you, over much glory, which He will prepare for you hereafter.

**CONSECRATION OF OURSELVES TO
JESUS CHRIST.**

THE INCARNATE WISDOM,

By the Hands of Mary. (1)

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most adorable Jesus! True God and True Man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary ever Virgin! I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and glory of Thy Father during eternity; and I adore Thee also in the virginal bosom of Mary, Thy most worthy Mother, in the time of Thine Incarnation.

I give Thee thanks, that Thou hast annihilated Thyself taking the form of a slave, in order to rescue me from the cruel slavery of the devil. I praise and glorify Thee, that Thou hast been pleased to submit Thyself to Mary, Thy holy Mother, in all things, in order to make me Thy faithful slave through her. But alas! ungrateful and faithless as I have been, I have not kept the promises which I made so solemnly to Thee in my baptism; I have not fulfilled my obligations; I do not deserve to be called Thy child nor yet Thy slave; and as there is nothing in me which does not merit Thine

(1) This Act of Consecration, composed by the Blessed de Montfort, may be said on the day of reception, on the paternal feast, and on the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

anger and Thy repulse, I dare no more come by myself before Thy Most Holy and August Majesty. It is on this account that I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou hast given me for a mediatrix with Thee. It is by her means that I hope to obtain of Thee contrition, and the pardon of my sins, the acquisition and the preservation of wisdom. I salute Thee, then, O Immaculate Mary, living tabernacle of the Divinity, where the Eternal Wisdom willed to be hidden and to be adored by Angels and by men. I hail thee, O Queen of heaven and earth to whose empire everything is subject which is under God.

I salute Thee, O sure refuge of sinners, whose mercy fails no one. Hear the desires which I have of the Divine Wisdom ; and for that end receive the vows and offerings which my lowness presents to thee. I, N., a faithless sinner—I renew and ratify to-day in thy hands the vows of my Baptism ; I renounce for ever Satan, his pomps and works ; and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life, and to be more faithful to Him than I have ever been before.

In the presence of all the heavenly court *I choose thee this day for my Mother and Mistress. I deliver and consecrate to thee as Thy slave, my body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior, and even the value of all my good actions, past present, and future ; leaving to you the entire and all*

right of disposing of me, and of all that belongs to me, without exception, according to Thy good pleasure to the greatest glory of God, in time and in eternity.

Receive O gracious Virgin, this little offering of my slavery, in honour of, and in union with, that subjection which the Eternal Wisdom deigned to have to thy Maternity, in homage to the power which both of you have over this little worm and miserable sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity hath favoured thee. I protest, that I wish, henceforth, as thy true slave, to seek thy honour, and to obey thee in all things.

O admirable Mother, present me to thy Dear Son, as His eternal slave, so that as He hath redeemed me by thee, by thee He may receive me.

O Mother of mercy, get me the grace to obtain the true Wisdom of God, and for that end place me in the number of those whom thou lovest, whom thou teachest, whom thou leadest, and whom thou nourishest and protectest, as thy children and thy slaves. O Faithful Virgin, make me in all things so perfect a disciple, imitator and slave of the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ thy Son, that I may attain, by thy intercession and by thy example, to the fullness of His age on earth, and of His glory in heaven. Amen.

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